

Richard Hodges

The Archaeology of Mediterranean Placemaking

BUTRINT AND THE
GLOBAL HERITAGE INDUSTRY



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The Archaeology of Mediterranean Placemaking

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Butrint and the Global Heritage Industry

Richard Hodges

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To Patrick

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... the aeroplane and the bikini, two inventions as far apart in technology as could be imagined, transformed the relationship between the Mediterranean and the north of Europe in the second half of the twentieth century ... In Communist Albania the behavior of tourists was seen as a sign of western decadence: Enver Hoxha complained about the antics of tourists ... 'with pants or no pants at all'.

Abulafia 2010: 636

Butrint is eternal. It owes a priceless debt to Virgil who in his epic poem, *Aeneid*, had his exiled hero from Troy, Aeneas, pause here on his way to found Rome. At a stroke Butrint belonged to a Mediterranean foundation myth. Virgil's choice of Butrint – 'a Troy in miniature' – was no accident. A member of Augustus's new imperial court at Rome, he was paying personal tribute to Augustus's right-hand man, Agrippa, whose first wife, Caecilia Attica, had property at Butrint. With such serendipity this place has been forever sealed in aspic, at least until our era. As Claude Lévi-Strauss famously observed, myths 'are instruments for the obliteration of time' (1970: 16). Instinctively the post-war communist dictator of Albania, Enver Hoxha, appreciated this even though he eschewed Virgil's connection with Butrint in favour of his own historical myths. For most visitors today, however, Butrint conjures up an entirely different experience. It is the Other, a Mediterranean paradise, a place in a Homeric landscape, somewhere simply and pleasantly timeless (Figure 0.1). In a postmodern age it is a shrine to historicism within an exceptional, protected park environment. It is not Disneyesque. Quite the contrary, it is a trip through a natural hyperreality that tacitly challenges the essential homogenization of social space and experience of modern capitalism (cf. Jameson 2005: 366).

Butrint was extraordinarily beautiful when Enver Hoxha's infernal regime collapsed in 1991, quite unforgettable when I first ventured there in 1993, and



Figure 0.1 View from Monte Mile of Lake Butrint, the Straits of Corfu, and northern Corfu.

remains a precious oasis within the mayhem (half-finished roads, poor zoning, ubiquitous rubbish) of modern Albania today. On every visit, notwithstanding the circumstances, the glorious assault on one's senses is as powerful as ever. You need know nothing about Aeneas to be seduced by the shimmering reflections off the lagoon, or to fall in love with the shafts of sparkling light on the monuments filtered by the woodland canopy where golden oriels flit through the foliage like tropical parrots. Butrint genuinely fits our new global ideals of a Unesco World Heritage site (it was inscribed in 1992) (Figure 0.2).

My first visit was at the suggestion of the British ambassador in Rome. Lord Rothschild and his friend Lord Sainsbury were seeking an archaeologist to dig here. The two men had created the Butrint Foundation after briefly visiting this erstwhile pariah state. As for me I had always wanted to excavate a classical port on the Mediterranean: being at the crossroads of the *Mare Nostrum* Butrint promised to be the opportunity of a lifetime.

On first seeing Butrint on a misty September morning, I grasped the meaning of the lyricism it invoked in all who had been there. Butrint in its lakeland setting owns a transcendental landscape (cf. Urry and Larsen 2011: 110). Here, as Lawrence Durrell remarks in *Prospero's Cell* (1945: 11), 'the blue



Figure 0.2 View of Butrint, looking westwards towards the Straits of Corfu.

really begins': the Ionian light grades blues, and the perpetually choppy waters of the Straits of Corfu invest it with even more colour in this unforgettable seascape. It seemed obvious, if presumptuous, that the Butrint Foundation, during its watch, must prioritize protection of this place – in ancient terms, its *genius loci* – for future visitors while bringing new archaeological thinking to this time-warped place. With such neo-liberal values, rightly or wrongly (cf. Herzfeld 2010), we championed a new episode in the long history of Butrint.

The immediate opposition was very apparent. Remorseless paladins circled Butrint and above all its contested landscape in those first years, and still do. Marinas, golf courses, helicopter pads and much besides were promised so that a gentrification of sorts, involving concrete desolation on this coast, might resemble the tragic anonymity of Corfu. There was big talk, too, of an airport on the plain beyond Butrint. This was the context for our project and the power-struggle described in this book. My stalwart colleagues and I showed a resistance – denounced in one archaeological congress in Tirana's palace of ministers as tourism archaeology – until our chance arose to make Butrint eternal when a brief civil war (the so-called 'pyramid crisis') in 1997 plunged Albania into chaos. With this the opposition momentarily evaporated. Once

off-limits to tourists, backed by The Getty Conservation Program, Unesco and the World Bank, in April 1998 we mounted a workshop to discuss the creation of a park at Butrint; subsequently, and persistently, we contrived the making of a much enlarged world heritage area (encompassing the buffer zone around the site) in 1999. Then, working with the Minister of Culture, Edi Rama (since 2013 Prime Minister), and supported by the supreme and steadfast generosity of the Packard Humanities Institute, we created a Butrint-based administration that – along with new boundaries recognized by Unesco – was in operation by 2000. New forms of opposition to our neo-liberal strategy then emerged. Notwithstanding years of corruption and a rollercoaster ride of ups and downs, fifteen years later this park is here to stay, a perceived model for cultural heritage practice in Albania. There will be over 150,000 visitors this year, keeping twenty or more people in work and, through seasonal projects, many more local workers besides.

In this book I have condensed the experiences and research involving legions of friends and colleagues, compiled when I was at the British School at Rome, the Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture, the University of East Anglia, the University of Pennsylvania Museum and now The American University of Rome. Sections of this short book have been published elsewhere, namely in: *Byzantine Butrint* (Hodges, Bowden and Lako 2004); *Eternal Butrint* (Hodges 2006); *Roman Butrint* (Hansen and Hodges 2007); *Butrint 4* (Hansen, Hodges and Leppard 2013); the *Papers of the British School at Rome* (Gwynne, Hodges and Vroom 2014); *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* (Hodges and Paterlini 2013); and *Public Archaeology* (Hodges 2014a).

Archaeological excavations, contrary to modern myth, are the product of collaboration and shared experience. The Butrint project is no exception. The scientific reports published to date make this very clear. However, I wish to express my greatest debt to Jacob Rothschild and John Sainsbury, who appointed me as Scientific Director to the project in 1993, and have supported me throughout. I also owe a huge debt to David Packard, President of the Packard Humanities Institute, who encouraged and then supported these adventures in Albania from 1998 to 2012. Thanks, too, to the Dietel Partners who through an anonymous donor generously supported the community programme at Butrint, and to the Drue Heinz Trust for funding the Butrint archive research and publication.

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idiosyncratic Minister of Culture, Edi Rama, from January–July 1999, thanks to the Open Society. I owe a great debt to the Open Society and to Edi for this peerless experience.

Numerous scholars and specialists visited us at Butrint, braving the bobbing, malfunctioning ferries and pot-holed roads to reach us, and providing invaluable counsel. From their visits I gained a wonderful education. One visitor stands out: I would like to record my gratitude to Charles K. Williams; together we spent many wonderful hours in Albania, Greece, Italy and Philadelphia discussing Butrint. Finally, a special thanks to my family – my wife, Kim, and Charlotte, William and the effervescent Rafi.

In gratitude for a peerless experience, I dedicate this book to Patrick Fairweather, ‘architect’ of the Butrint project and patient mentor.

Giove, Umbria

Championing Placemaking

It is the responsibility of archaeologists conducting fieldwork to make themselves familiar with, acknowledge, and respect all the cultural values of the site they are working on . . . and to share their knowledge with local communities.

World Archaeological Congress 5 (2003) resolution 4

There is no there there.

Gertrude Stein, Everybody's Autobiography (1937)

My generation of archaeologists is a pivotal one, supported by universities and granting agencies to make a difference in the study of world archaeology. We went to university in the sixties or seventies and, essentially, we never left this arena. We belong to a university generation entrusted with the 'process of engaging with the material traces of the past and attempting to produce narrative and discourses about them' as the ideas and realities of nation-states were established within a modern capitalist framework' (Hamilakis 2007: 16). Now those same universities are reconsidering their commitment to archaeology, and with new priorities, funding is diminishing. This follows a period of intense auditing and a 'bureaucratic overkill' associated without any serious debate on teaching and learning (Hamilakis 2004: 291). With such changes we are compelled to question the future of an archaeology that has shaped our lifetime. Where will that future lie? Will there be the means to challenge great questions about the past? Or will archaeologists increasingly concentrate upon making sense of and re-assessing discoveries made by our baby-boomer generation? One thing is certain. A major aspect of the future of studying the past is to make it accessible to our communities. Largely without

formal training, we nevertheless belong to the research and development vanguard of the world's largest industry: tourism. We cannot afford any longer to ignore the inevitable. Public interest is becoming insatiable as global tourism and a global hunger for history reduces the import of mere reporting of digs. It follows that the conservation and presentation of archaeological sites is now as important in archaeological best practice as exploration. With these changes in our discipline, the actual experience in the place – its making, curating and its eventual product design – matters as much as the scientific publication of our discoveries. The future of our discipline will depend upon the role we create for archaeologists in the tourist industry. This is especially important in the Mediterranean with its extraordinary archaeological patrimony. As we approach this new future, accelerated by the cloud-based globalization of most industrial sectors, we need to reflect upon our baby steps as cultural heritage practitioners. (Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe ([www. encatc.org/culturalheritagecountsforeurope](http://www.encatc.org/culturalheritagecountsforeurope)) (2015) sets its sights on new strategic directions, but few of these involve the Mediterranean.) From these experiences, there is much to learn, not least from the errors.

Unlike anthropologists in reflexive mode such as James Clifford and George E. Marcus, archaeologists typically write about their discoveries rather than their experiences. Yet, increasingly, the practice of making places as a result of excavations and other forms of discovery is eclipsing the importance of understanding them. This book describes and evaluates some of the experiences I had at a very Mediterranean place, Butrint, with the Butrint Foundation (Figure 1.1). It traces the history of the Foundation, from its inception by Lord (Jacob) Rothschild and Lord (John) Sainsbury of Preston Candover after they accepted an invitation in 1992 from the Albanian archaeologist, Neritan Ceka, then Director of the Institute of Archaeology (in Tirana), to support investigations at this Graeco-Roman town, which occupied a picturesque isthmus close to the Straits of Corfu. The Butrint Foundation, a registered British charity, took shape soon after Butrint became Albania's first Unesco World Heritage site that same year. Over the course of nearly twenty years, the Butrint Foundation, coordinating a miscellany of international and Albanian entities, shaped Butrint as a well-conserved place that in 2014 attracted approximately 150,000 tourists and provided these visitors with a memorable Mediterranean experience.



Figure 1.1 Map of the Butrint National Park.

Butrint

Butrint sits at the crossroads of the Mediterranean, commanding the sea routes up the Adriatic Sea to the north, across the Mediterranean to the west, and south through the Ionian islands. Like ancient Dyrrachium (modern Durrës) to the north, the city also controlled a land route into the mountainous Balkan interior. The abandoned ancient and Medieval port is located 3 km inland from the Straits of Corfu in south Albania (Figure 1.2). For much of its long

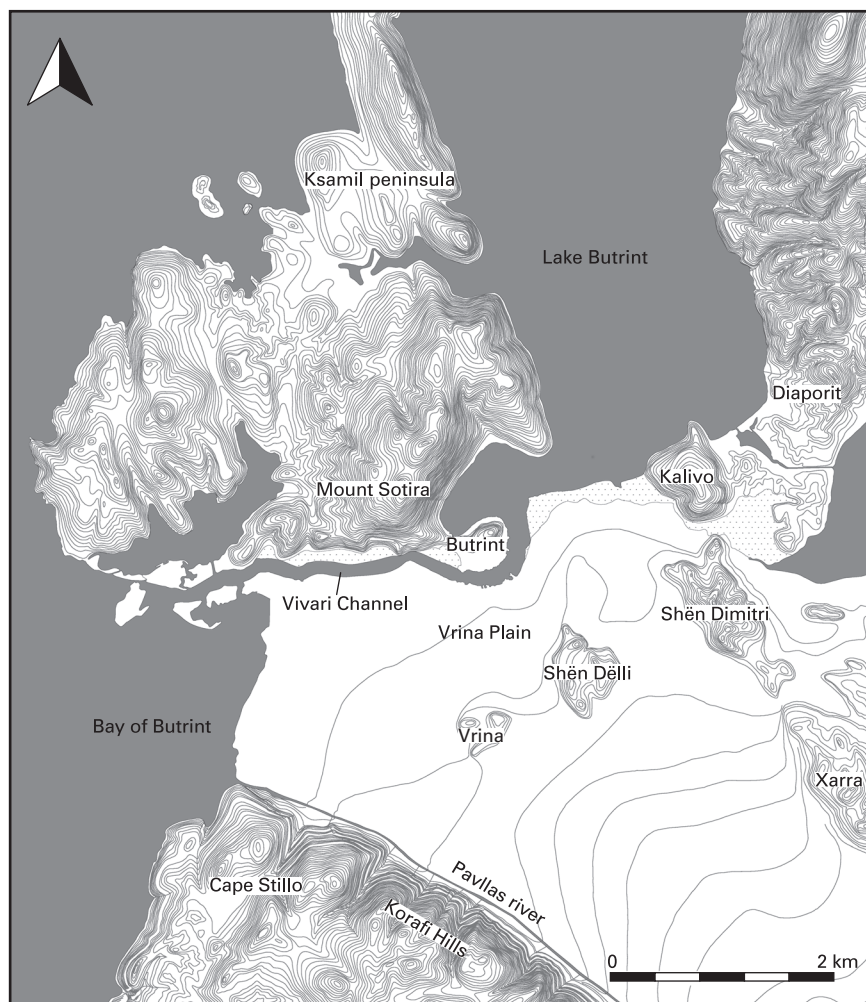


Figure 1.2 Map showing places around Butrint mentioned in the text.

history it occupied a hill on a bend in the Vivari Channel, which connects the Straits to the large inland lagoon of Lake Butrint. A narrow plain, formerly a marsh, separates the channel from a band of hills to the south, along which runs the frontier between Albania and Greece established by the Treaty of London in 1913. Immediately east of Lake Butrint, a range of hills and low mountains rise up to 824 m, effectively creating a basin around the ancient city and the inland lake.

The walled city covers an area of c. 16 hectares, but a geophysical survey on the eastern side of the Vivari Channel – the Vrina Plain – shows that at times in antiquity Butrint covered as much as 25 hectares. Butrint comprises two parts: the acropolis and the lower city. The acropolis is a long narrow hill, approximately 200 m long and 60 m at its widest, that rises up to 42 m above sea level at its east end; its sides are accentuated by a circuit of walls that separate it from the natural and artificial terraces gathered around the flanks of the hill. The lower city occupies the lower-lying contours down to the edge of the Vivari Channel.

The most obvious monuments outside the city walls, on the opposite side of the channel, are the Triangular Castle, which after 1572 became the nucleus of the early modern settlement and Ali Pasha's Castle (c. 1800) at the mouth of the Vivari Channel. Beyond the Triangular Castle to its east on the Vrina Plain, opposite the walled site, there are substantial remains of late Republican to Byzantine date. These, as we shall see in Chapter 3, form part of the Roman town and, later on, the late antique *vicus*.

Placemaking in archaeology

What do I mean by placemaking in archaeology? It is the practice of either creating or lending a place, ancient or modern, an identity that, with (today's) strategic management of conservation and presentation, attracts visitors whose support helps sustain it, ideally to international standards. In archaeology the theatre of excavation with the drama of discovery provides an added dimension to the making of places. 'The centrality of the concept of "found place" ... acquires further resonances when that found space is a working archaeological site' (Hamilakis and Theou 2013: 184). But the performance of an excavation is

only one component in the act of defining a place. Specifically, placemaking means looking beyond the archaeological research to create a narrative as a result of excavations, or monuments or objects to embed it in its region, and through various means to develop a public awareness of the archaeology. It involves archaeologists working collaboratively with communities (emulating many first-world museums), not just their peers. It involves devising economic as well as social strategies to exploit the values of the new narrative provided by the archaeology. As such, it means that excavations with their finds as well as the environmental context, and their scientific reporting, are the beginning of a process rather than the end.

Community engagement has not been a natural inclination of most archaeologists to date. Archaeologists commonly have sought support from their local community but resisted any reciprocal commitment to them not least because of the managerial challenges inherent in creating a sustainable archaeological place. Nevertheless, drawing upon obvious past achievements in making places out of previously anonymous locations is far from new. From Heinrich Schliemann's excavations at Mycenae and Troy to the recent discovery of the remains of King Richard III in a car park at Leicester (UK), archaeologists have engaged public awareness. Giving a place a new identity, especially in a world now determined by cloud-based communications, is to escape the local and create a brand. Archaeologists in the Old and New Worlds over the last century have become aware of their role in making places, both sustainable and attractive to visitorship, often defining these as parks, protected recreational places (Rubertone 2008; Walljasper 2007). Placemaking, as a result, is not new, and the concept itself is borrowed from late twentieth-century postmodern philosophy. It is particularly familiar to architects and urban designers who have made the same transition from the elitist language of constructing spaces in favour of a postmodernist populism (cf. Jameson 2005: 2–3).

The post-war Albanian dictator, Enver Hoxha, was well aware of the significance of place for sustaining the psychology of an isolated nation-state. His was a particular approach for ideological purposes, as I shall illustrate in the following chapters. Obviously, the needs of placemaking change with each generation and the unfolding rhythms of capitalism: historical interests, visitor demands and the global market, conservation strategies and administrative strategies alter continuously. Placemaking in archaeology, by necessity, means

confronting not only the characteristics of the place today, but involves strategic investment in shaping a new narrative. Any narrative is not fixed in aspic nor is it some readily definable off-the-shelf asset. It cannot be reduced to a formula. This is why authentic archaeological remains of a past place, viewed from multiple cultural and historical angles, hold infinite interest for the curious. And these remains will always hold this interest. In tandem with reconstructing past landscapes, adapting as often as not to climate, places – contrary to modernist needs for nationalist origin myths – are in a perpetual process of change.

There are many definitions of place, but perhaps the most compelling is Marc Augé's. In a reflection upon places and non-places he defines a place as 'an invention: it has been discovered by those who claim it as their own'. Foundation narratives, Augé argues, 'bring the spirits of the place together with the first inhabitants in the common adventure of the group' (Augé 1995: 43). 'A place is relational, historical and concerned with identity, whereas a non-place is a space which cannot be defined by these criteria' (Augé 1995: 77–8). Frequently places, to cite the anthropologist, A. Appadurai, practise 'tournaments of value' – complex periodic events that are culturally well defined, often sacred in nature and entirely different from the routines of economic life. 'Participation in them is likely to be both a privilege of those in power and an instrument of status contests between them ... [W]hat is at issue ... is not just status, rank, fame or reputation of actors but the disposition of the central tokens of value in the society in question' (Appadurai 1986: 21). Temple cults and later, the Church, commonly legitimized a genre of cultural products at places. MacCannell believes that there is a process of sacralization that 'renders a particular natural or cultural artifact a sacred object of the tourist ritual' (1999: 42–8; Urry and Larsen 2011: 12).

Supermodernity, on the other hand, produces non-places. These are 'spaces which are not themselves anthropological places and which ... do not integrate the earlier places (which are listed, classified, promoted to the status of "places of memory", and assigned to a circumscribed and specific position)' (Augé 1995: 78). Airports, shopping malls, cinema complexes and hotel resorts are quintessential non-places, although there is a new effort to market them as authentic places. Bland and lacking contradiction, they belong to a monotonous world that reflects our own image. It is hard not to conclude that the pursuit of

the exotic and diversity ends in uniformity (Urry and Larsen 2011: 8). In the concrete reality of today, places and non-places intertwine and tangle together. Place and non-place are opposed polarities, together ‘the scrambled game of identity and relations’ (Urry and Larsen 2011: 8) that is ceaselessly being rewritten.

Place, Augé concludes, becomes a refuge for the habitué of non-places (Augé 1995: 107). Very simply, a Unesco World Heritage site – indeed, most any heritage site, with its relational and historical identity – is by definition a place, whereas if we follow Augé’s logic, a vacation resort with its artificial world ‘surrendered to solitary individuality, to the fleeting, the temporary and ephemeral’ artificiality is a quintessential non-place (Augé 1995: 78).

Of course, the inhabitants of non-places are attracted to places as if they were engaged in pilgrimage. Gaining ‘World Heritage’ status connotes a social and spatial separation from a normal place of residence or vacation and, invariably, conventional social ties. In such a place, out of time, conventionality is suspended, and there is an assumed direct relationship with the authentic. Such places – and the pilgrimage to them – could be regarded as a passage not just to completing a lifetime bucket list but also to a certain social status (Urry and Larsen 2011: 12). The Unesco brand has successfully tapped into this trend, marketing its sites as globally authentic, and essentially relevant as pilgrimage places precisely because they are no longer past, dead and safe heritage (cf. Urry and Larsen 2011: 140, though see Meskell 2015).

Placemakers, it follows, whether representing Unesco or any other institution, are seeking to give some kind of authenticity to a place, a *genius loci*.

* * *

This book, then, comprises personalized reflections about the archaeology and cultural heritage history of a twenty-year odyssey in south-west Albania. Its aim is to demonstrate that modern archaeology has an important place in multiple communities, not just the academy (Figure 1.3). Most of all modern archaeology has a significant contribution to make to the global heritage industry, but this requires new approaches to capacity-building if archaeology is to really operate successfully in this sector.

The book has four themes. Chapter 2 reviews Virgil’s long influence on Butrint until communist times. Chapter 3 considers the making of a master



Figure 1.3 View of the Hellenistic theatre area in the lower town.

narrative for Butrint, using the archaeology from selective excavations undertaken by the Butrint Foundation. Chapter 4 considers the struggle of placemaking in Albania – and our neo-liberal presumptions – during the early post-communist era, between 1993–2012. It is a personal history of sorts. Finally, recognizing my generation of archaeologists is a pivotal one in the shaping of cultural heritage as a global industry, Chapter 5 reflects upon a number of issues in the light of the Butrint Foundation's experience in Albania, asking who matters in the shaping of a place – international regulations, the nation, the archaeologist, the visitor, the local community or some combination of all of these stakeholders including developers?

Virgil's Long Shadow

Toward evening we arrived at a village called Livari, a corruption, it is thought of Vivarium, from the fisheries in the lake, which here finds an outlet into the sea by means of a river. By the people of the place the lake is also called Boïdoperes. At Corfu the village is known as Butrinto or Vutzindro, but in the country itself we found these names unknown, a source of confusion, which caused us much difficulty. On the opposite side of the water is a rocky height, with remains of walls, which mark the site of the ancient Buthrotum, the celsam Buthroti urbem of Virgil. As we were embarking to cross to Corfu, I said to a Turkish official who was standing by, 'Now we are leaving Turkey?' 'Yes,' he replied, 'now you are going to Europe.'

Tozer 1869: 232–3

Butrint owes its modern history to a few lines in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Aeneas, the exiled Trojan and ancestor of the Roman people paused at Butrint according to the early Imperial poet and discovered 'a Troy in miniature'. Virgil's description cast a long shadow.

Here is the opening of the long passage describing Aeneas's encounter here with his fellow Trojan exile, Helenus:

We had soon put the cloud capped citadels of Phaecia down below the horizon and we coasted along Epirus until we entered the harbour of Chaonia and then walked up to the lofty city of Buthrotum.

Virgil, *Aeneid* III 291–3, trans. David West (1990)

Butrint was singled out in the later decades of the first century B.C. In Virgil's epic the earlier traditions of links between Epirus and Troy are transformed when Butrint is portrayed as a mirror image of Troy – with gates, a brook and an acropolis, all a miniature version of the Phrygian city. Its foundation is

ascribed to two of the most exemplary and virtuous Trojans, Helenus and Andromache, and most importantly, Aeneas stopped here to meet them. This piece of instant placemaking is all the more remarkable because Butrint previously had merited only the briefest mentions by Virgil's late Republican contemporaries, first by Dionysius of Halicarnassus as '[Butrint] a seaport of Epirus', and then by Julius Caesar – 'Butrint, a city over by Corcyra' (cf. Hansen 2009).

Butrint was not only one of the stops along the odyssean route taken by the exiled Aeneas, but significantly represents *the* urban counterpart to Nikopolis (near modern Preveza, Greece), 'the victory city' founded by Octavian after his victory at nearby Actium in 31 BC over Antony and Cleopatra in the Ionian Sea.

What prompted Virgil to select Butrint for such eternal prominence? His reasons were far from serendipitous. They lay in the author's desire to work with his chosen audience, the courtiers of Octavian, who was soon to be elevated to become the Emperor Augustus. In particular, he was reaching out to Agrippa, who had clinched the battle of Actium for Augustus (Figure 2.1). Agrippa's first wife was Caecilia Attica, daughter of Titus Pomponius Atticus, the extraordinarily rich landowner and friend of Cicero whose estate with its celebrated library lay close to Butrint (Hansen 2011). A recurrent theme in the correspondence between Cicero and Atticus is the latter's concern to protect his status as benefactor of the Buthrotians. He cannot have envisaged just how enduring that legacy would be; it is just as palpable today as it was in the late Republic.

Atticus died the year before the battle of Actium, but his local clients, the Pomponii, were clearly key magistrates actively involved in the re-foundation of a colony of veterans at Butrint, soon after the celebrated battle. Two marble portraits of Agrippa at Butrint from this highly significant period, alongside those to Augustus, materially attest to the town's regard for their patronage. These portraits almost certainly graced some part of the major new civic centre that celebrated the town's elevation to colony status. Marble statues are one thing, though; a text is quite different because it can be reinvented and copied and, above all, it can be distributed. In short, the political support emanating from the highest circles not only ensured investment in the hitherto minor sanctuary port, but catapulted it before the court chronicler and propagandist,



Figure 2.1 Portrait of Agrippa (now in the Butrint Museum).

Virgil. In his desire to serve Agrippa's interests, the poet invented a Butrint as a complement to Nikopolis in the *Aeneid*, indirectly highlighting the twin roles of power of Octavian/Augustus and Agrippa. The former was the new *princeps* and founder of a new Rome, the latter the image of Republican virtue and upholder of exemplary tradition with its roots in Epirus. As such it was a veiled compliment to the new Imperial family, both by the symbolic value of its Trojan ancestry and by the promotion of an area of genuine political and economic interest to its immediate members (Hansen 2011).

Butrint, given the timeless fascination for Troy and Rome, and their mythic interconnected relationship, was forever vested in the making of the Mediterranean.

Virgil's shadow

Butrint existed before Virgil. Hellenistic inscriptions show it was a minor healing sanctuary, dedicated to Asclepius. Its historical memory extends even further back. Thucydides (III 85, 2) records its close association with the nearby island of Kerkyra or Corfu, and it is in part this location that much later led Strabo (VII 324, 446) to describe its location as being at the end of the peninsula (Heximili, Ksamili) at the mouth of the freshwater lake named *Pelodes limen*, which leads towards the Ionian Sea. Butrint is marked on late Roman itineraries and on a series of maps from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries, where it is marked mostly as *Butintro*, *Butrinto*, but also in other variants such as *Butunto* and *Protanto* or *Butroti*, *Butrento*, *Buirinto*, *Botanto*, *Botrado*, *Botranto*, *Botrinto* and *Botintro*. Some maps occasionally show it as *Pilodes portus*, *Pelodes portus* instead of Butrint. In the Venetian portolans of the sixteenth century, the name of the town has become *Bothrotos*, *Bothrento*, *Botronto* and *Botre*, while there are references to the old town (*chora palaia*) and numerous fishing installations (*bibaria*, *vivaria*) (Soustal 2004).

But as we shall see, at no point in its history was Butrint a major town or port. Not surprisingly, then, few late antique sources refer to it. The *enkomion* to St. Therinos, who died a martyr's death under the Emperor Decius (249–251) in Butrint, is attributed to the metropolitan Bishop Arsenios of Corfu

(writing in the ninth to tenth centuries). Late antique itineraries mention Butrint as lying between Phoinike and *Glykys Limen*, or between the island of Saseno (Sazan) and Nikopolis. In the so-called *Synekdemos* of Hierocles – an inventory of provinces and cities, probably compiled in 527/528, and which provides an approximate account of the situation under the Emperor Theodosios II (408–450) – *Buthrotos* is listed as the seventh of the towns of the province of *Palaia Epeiros* (Old Epirus), then subordinated to the metropolis of Nikopolis. The names for at least two bishops of Butrint are recorded although the attribution of a third (*Zenobius Bostroensis*), whose name occurs in AD 451 amidst the list of bishops of Epirus, is less certain. After AD 458 it belonged to the bishopric of Nikopolis.

Butrint is rarely mentioned between the seventh and eleventh centuries. In the so-called *Notitia of the Iconoclasts*, compiled after AD 754, it is listed as the fourth and last-but-one city of the province of Old Epirus, under the metropolis of Nikopolis. The transmitted form of *Bythipotu* is attributed to a mistaken reading of the original Latin document. In the late ninth century (880–884), St. Elias the Younger and his pupil and companion Daniel were charged with being *Hagarenes* (foreigners) and spies, and imprisoned at Butrint (*polis epineios*) by a man whose ‘rank is lower than that of the *stratelates*’.

The inventories of bishoprics from the tenth to twelfth centuries identify the Bishop of Butrint as subject to the metropolitan bishopric of Naupaktos, the ecclesiastical province that took the name of the old provincial capital of Nikopolis.

Late in the eleventh century Butrint suddenly found itself at the centre of a major conflict. In May 1081 the Normans under Robert Guiscard conquered it, and it became his base against the Byzantine Empire. Either in March 1083 or the spring of 1084 the Normans returned to Italy. In 1084 Guiscard renewed his campaign against Byzantium, and Butrint was once more occupied. However, in 1085 the Byzantines, with the help of their Venetian allies, defeated the Normans in the vicinity of Butrint.

Sporadic references to Butrint occur during the twelfth century. The Arab geographer Al-Idrisi mentions *Butrinto* as a small, well-populated town with markets. By contrast, Benedict of Peterborough describes Butrint as a *castellum desertum* in 1191. By this time it had associations not only with Aeneas, but also as the birthplace of Judas Iscariot.

Following the division of the Byzantine Empire in 1204, Butrint was allotted to Venice. The Venetians were, however, not interested in taking possession of the Epirote mainland, and permitted Michael Comnenos Doukas to rule the territory as their vassal from the border to the (Venetian) province of Dyrrachion to Naupaktos. Records of ecclesiastical disputes provide our principal sources for Butrint during the first decades of the thirteenth century. As noted earlier, the bishops of Butrint were subordinate to the diocese of Naupaktos until 1232. Then in the turbulence of thirteenth-century politics it passed to the Angevins, back to the Byzantines again and then to the Angevins once more. In the following century, Butrint and Corfu shared almost the same destiny. This picture emerges in the numerous Venetian documents revealing their keen interest in the town and island respectively. Butrint became Angevin again, possibly in the year 1331 when Philip of Taranto was fighting Walter of Brienne. In 1337/38 it seems that the diocese of Butrint was unified with that of Glykys (south of Parga).

But from the mid-fourteenth century the Venetians set out to take possession of the islands of Corfu, Paxos, Kephallonia and Zakynthos. Butrint in this context was the bridgehead to the mainland opposite Corfu. In 1380 it was occupied by the Navarese Company. Shortly thereafter the Corfiote Riccardo Altavilla evicted the Navarese from Butrint and entrusted the city to Charles III of Naples. But on 11 June 1386, following the death of Charles, the Venetians took possession of Corfu and Butrint. The new belt of Venetian fortifications on the *terra ferma* opposite Corfu consisted of Butrint, Saigata (also entitled Bastia), Parga (from 1401) and Phanari. All were the first line of defence against the Albanians and later the Ottomans (Figure 2.2).

Virgil redux

Scholars arrived at Butrint as the Mediterranean fissioned into two, with Christendom increasingly challenged by the Turks (see Gwynne, Hodges and Vroom 2014). The Florentine priest, Cristoforo Buondelmonti (c. 1380/85–c. 1430) travelled extensively throughout the Aegean islands to record the antiquities associated with the epic journeys described in Homer and Virgil, introducing a new imaginative geography to early Renaissance Europe. He



Figure 2.2 A view of the Triangular Castle from the chain ferry.

disseminated his observations in two books: *Descriptio Insulae Cretae* (c. 1417) and *Liber Insularum Archipelagi* (c. 1420). The latter was given to the Roman bibliophile, Cardinal Giordano Orsini in a manuscript lavishly illuminated with schematic maps showing the locations of classical ruins (now unfortunately lost). Illustrated editions of this text were popular and influential throughout the fifteenth century. Writing in 1420, Buondelmonti described the mountains of Epirus, ‘*in quibus Heleni propinqua matre Troiaque, et Butroto nunc panditur ultro*’, and recalled the foundation of the city by the Trojan Helenus, referring also to Virgil ‘*... celsam Buthroti ascendimus urbem*’. Although the reference to Butrint in the text is limited to a quotation from Virgil, the illustration of Corfu also features the fortress of Butrint on the Albanian coastline.

Roughly a decade later, Ciriaco d’Ancona (1391–1452) travelled in the same area. On 26 December 1435 he arrived at Butrint and made a tour of the site and copied an inscription in Latin (*CIL* 581) and one in Greek (*CIG* 1823)

from the walls before heading down the coast to the court of the Neapolitan Prince of Epirus, Carlo II Tocco.

Butrint was most definitely an internationally known place now, and with the descriptions by Boundelmonti and Ciriaco d'Ancona it became the improbable setting for the neo-Latin epic, *Carlias*, written by the Florentine, Ugolino Verino (1438–1516) (Thurn 1995; 2002). This poem celebrates the career, both real and imaginary, of the Emperor Charlemagne (AD 742–814). A founding father of medieval Europe, Charlemagne was indelibly the champion who had conquered the infidel throughout his empire, and whose coronation in Rome on Christmas Day in AD 800 re-established the Western Roman Empire. History was rewritten to accommodate the long shadow of Charlemagne's reputation: 'The Middle Ages placed little emphasis on the objective reconstruction of past events. Instead, recollection was an interpretive act, a selective process that chose what was thought to be valuable and worthy of remembrance' (Gabriele 2012: 6). Verino's poem is a marvellous illustration of this.

In the epic Charlemagne is cast as a Christian champion whose achievements excel those of Aeneas, Achilles and Odysseus. Divided in two parts, the poem comprises six books recalling Charlemagne's mythical exploits in the Holy Land and concludes with the expulsion of the Goths from Italy. The epic includes all the classical tropes: it begins *in medias res*; there are banquets, journeys, storms at sea, great battles and councils of war. In a remarkable piece of invention, the epic *katabasis* is remodelled in imitation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* so that Charlemagne not only travels through the Underworld, but also continues his journey to Purgatory and Paradise, so that this Christian hero's destiny is affirmed in the presence of God (Gwynne, Hodges and Vroom 2014).

Virgil's association of Butrint with Troy had added significance for the Frankish king. By choosing Butrint as the first stage of an eastern crusade, the army of the Franks would have achieved an immediate success. By projecting their return in this fantasy, they revived past glories – above all, the prize of retaken Troy – thereby assuring this enterprise of an epic success. Strategically placed on the Albanian coastline, 'lofty Butrint' features at key points throughout the *Carlias*. In Book 1 Charlemagne and his companions, having incurred the anger of Satan on the Aegean Sea, are swept ashore at Epirus. A seer advises Charlemagne to find King Justinus at Butrint (cited from Gwynne, Hodges and Vroom 2014):

Quare, age, festina muros ac tecta subire
Butroti, hos supera colles et moenia quaere!

Verino, *Carlias*, 1. 237–8

(So, come, hurry to the walls and houses of Butrint and cross these hills and make for the city walls!)¹

Verino imagines how Charlemagne's crusading army would be received as they use Butrint for their winter quarters before proceeding to the Holy Land. Once inside the town, Verino describes it's main square as follows:

Dum sic alternis pubes Butrotia dictis
Belgarum signat proceres, ad limina ventum est
Regia. Campus erat medio latissimus urbis
Marmoreis stratus tegulis, ac plurima circum
Buxus erat platanusque virens Daphneaque laurus,
Et late vernis mulcebant questibus auras
Assuete volucres circumque supraque volare;
Quin etiam aurato nitidae de fornice lymphae
Hippocrinei stillabant fluminis instar.
Editiore loco nascentis lampada Phoebi
Regia marmoreis spectabat nixa columnis,
Undique quam Pario cingebat porticus ingens
Marmore suffulta et paries emblemata pictus.

Verino, *Carlias*, 1. 302–14

(While thus the youth of Butrint point out the Belgian princes to each other, they arrive at the royal palace. There was a great wide square in the middle of the city paved with marble slabs, and surrounded by evergreen box, plane trees and Daphnean laurel and far and wide birds were charming the breezes with spring songs as they were flew round and about; in addition, bright fountains were gushing from golden spouts as though from the Hippocraine stream.

On higher ground the rays of the rising sun were illuminating the royal palace built upon marble columns; a great portico, supported by Parian marble, enclosed this on all sides, and its walls were decorated with mosaic.)

The Franks are wined and dined at Justinus's court, after which games are staged in Butrint's theatre. The festivities over, the shadow of Charlemagne's father, Pepin, reminds his son that his destiny will be explained after a voyage through the Underworld, Purgatory and Paradise. Butrint, as it happens, is also

a gateway to the Underworld. Charlemagne starts his search for the entrance and finally as he descends from Paradise, echoing Virgil's *Aeneid*:

Rex iter accelerans per inhospita saxa Chimere
Sub lucem celsi Butroti ad moenia tendit.

Verino, *Carlias*, 8. 901–02

(The king hastens his journey through the inhospitable rocks of Mt Chimaera and just before dawn proceeds towards the walls of lofty Butrint.)

Verino's selection of Butrint in his poem about Charlemagne is pure fiction. Uppermost in the poet's mind, we may surmise, was the association of Charlemagne with (Virgil's) Aeneas, the founder of Rome, and through this Butrint served as Troy (the latter being in Ottoman hands by this time). Verino almost certainly had no notion that the place itself, judging from the archaeology (see Chapter 3), amounted to little more than a fortified fishing village by this time. Nevertheless, these relationships across time and space should not be idly dismissed, even if the archaeology at face value compels one to do so.

This is an example of Umberto Eco's literary hyperreality: 'there is an infinity of places that never really existed in reality, but where many fictional adventures take place. Many of these places are now part of the collective imagination' (Eco 2013: 431). Fifteen centuries after Virgil invented this poem, the displaced memory of this association, courtesy of Buondelmonti's accounts and Ciriaco d'Ancona's lost *Commentaria*, was taking a new shape. No less significantly for Verino and his dedicatee, Charles VIII, Butrint was also by the late fifteenth century a Christian bulwark on the Balkan coast.

Butrint, then, symbolized a historic gateway close to Corfu in an unstable region (Figure 2.3). Fortress Butrint greatly enlarged by the ultimately successful story of Aeneas, would have resonated with fifteenth-century audiences. As we have already seen, it was not a new association of Aeneas and Butrint, but by this time the town was deteriorating as a place (see Chapter 3). Without doubt, the actual status of civic life in the town was immaterial to this narrative. No palace, amphitheatre or fine square could be found at this time. As a result, perhaps precisely because his knowledge of Butrint was sketchy, Verino provided it with a grandiosity worthy of the Trojan heroes.

Like the *Aeneid*, *Carlias* was an instrument with a political purpose. Did its dedicatee, we may wonder, comprehend these layers of meaning and



Figure 2.3 The image of a lion (the 'Lion of St. Mark'?) on sherds of a Maiolica jug.

associations? If Charles VIII had visited Butrint, the archaeology now shows (see Chapter 3), he would have been profoundly puzzled. But he might have readily recognized that Verino's poem and the combination of military architecture and the cultural behaviour of Butrint's frontier community were different components of a shared identity directed at confronting the seemingly unstoppable rise of the Ottomans (Gwynne, Hodges and Vroom 2014).

A place with multiple meanings

Butrint was finally ceded to the Ottomans shortly after the Treaty of Campo Formio (1797), which marked the end of the Venetian empire. From this time until 1991, Butrint belonged to a frontier zone that was reconfigured several times. Its imaginative geography took several contradictory iterations. Christian visitors came here, of course: to spy, paint and explore.

The first major description of Butrint's topography is by Colonel W.M. Leake who visited Butrint in 1805. Leake arrived by boat from Saranda, and describes his arrival at Butrint thus:

As we approach Vutzindro (Butrint), the water becomes muddy, and in the bay is almost fresh. This bay is very shallow on the northern side, and the bar

at the mouth of the river will even now, when the water is still at the highest, but just admit of the entrance of *káikaí*, or small coasting vessels. We row three maybe four miles up the river, through a plain once perhaps the property of Atticus, a friend of Cicero, and now peopled with horses from the neighbouring village. We then arrived at the *Livári*, or more vulgarly *livari*; that is to say the principal fishery, which is on the left side of the river, at its exit from the lake, nearly opposite to the peninsula which, was anciently occupied by *Buthrotum*. The only buildings at the *Livári* are a ruined house of Venetian construction, and near it an old triangular castle, occupied by a dirty *bilibásh* of the *Vazír*, and fifteen or twenty soldiers.

Leake 1835: 95

Weeks later, the French diplomat François Pouqueville, Leake's rival at the court of Ali Pasha, also visited Butrint, writing a description that was similar to that of Leake:

... on the south side of the channel, communicating between that lake and the sea, is constructed the modern Venetian fortress of Buthrinto, and on the opposite side are the ruins of old *Buthrotum* . . . These ruins show an acropolis or citadel, and the Roman town inclosed within a double wall, containing fragments of both Greek and Roman architecture. But, in the walls of the acropolis are preserved foundations of the highest antiquity, consisting of vast blocks without cement. Between the hill *Megalongi* and the mouth of the *Simois* is the road-stead of *Geroviglia* . . . nearly two English miles broad and long, is cut asunder in the middle by a barrier of strong reeds, to inclose the fishing grounds, leased out yearly together with the lake and customs.'

Pouqueville 1820: 34–5

Leake seems to have been charmed by Butrint; by contrast, Pouqueville loathed its mosquito-infested conditions. Other visitors ventured here as well: in 1819 the French artist, Louis Dupré, visited in the company of the British High Commissioner on Corfu, Sir Thomas Maitland, in order to meet Ali Pasha. The ruins of the ancient city moved him to speculate on future possibilities: 'Butrint, ancient *Buthrotum*, is today a tumble of ruins, but once in a more heroic age and under a less barbarous regime was a place of renown. Without doubt explorations of the ruins will one day bear fruit and bring forth a great wealth of discoveries that have hitherto been covered for all these centuries by the curtain of night' (Dupré 1825: 9–10).

Throughout the nineteenth century Butrint was visited by tourists and artists who found it easy to make the short trip from Corfu. The best known artist of this time to record Butrint was Edward Lear. Lear excluded Butrint from his famous 1848 itinerary but during his residence on Corfu during the later 1850s visited a number of times (Noakes 1979: 319–21) sketching Butrint on 7 January and again on 7 March 1857. A decade later the Reverend Henry Fanshawe Tozer arrived from the interior by the Venetian castle, aiming to embark for Corfu. His recollection is cited at the beginning of this chapter. A classically trained Victorian, he was evidently drawn here by Virgil's account.

The end of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of Albania in 1913 led to a different frontier experience for Butrint, committing it initially to be a non-place. Briefly Butrint was made over to Greece in the spring of 1913. The Italians challenged this decision, as well as that regarding Cape Stylo, and in the ensuing Treaty of London the eastern side of the Straits of Corfu was given to the new republic of Albania. The local Greek minority was enraged and for six months administered the region as the independent kingdom of Epirus Vetus before it was reluctantly ceded to Albania, with peace assured by an Italian peacekeeping force until 1919.

This was the context for a new generation of visitors. One of the first was an intrepid British graduate student who arrived in 1923. S.S. Clarke was a quintessential Oxford man, steeped in Greats. His diaries contain a synopsis of Leake's description of Butrint made in 1805 as well as references to these earlier accounts. These notes make his decision not to visit Butrint on 6 May all the more interesting.

Leave the pillbox 5.05 and going SW reach house at Vivari 5.15 – no barca.
At place named Buthroton on Austrian map – acropolis inaccessible (no ferry) as photograph from Turkish (?Or Venetian) castle on near SW side.
Just opposite in foreground is a ruined tower? of Turkish epoch.

Clarke's diffidence towards 'the acropolis' at Butrint – curious as it seems now – is almost certainly because his principal interest was to discover and survey Hellenistic sites (Hodges forthcoming). For this reason, the hilltop settlement of Phoinike beyond the north end of Lake Butrint was of singular interest, primarily because Polybius in his *Histories* described it as the richest

Hellenistic site in the region. Butrint, it seems, notwithstanding Leake's description from 1805, and the palpably romantic lagoonal setting of the ancient town, was first and foremost dismissed as a deserted medieval, Venetian and Ottoman town with alleged origins in the Roman and pre-Roman period.

Clarke's lukewarm interest in the ancient port helps to shed light upon a bigger issue: why did the Director of the Italian Archaeological Mission, Luigi Maria Ugolini, decide initially to excavate at Phoinike as opposed to Butrint (which he visited in 1924), only to change his mind two years later and launch the Butrint excavations with which his name will always be associated? In retrospect, writing in 1927, it seems that three years earlier Ugolini – on behalf of the Italian Archaeological Mission – was interested in both Greek and Roman archaeological sites. Butrint, however, appeared to be a place dominated *poeticamente* by its ivy-covered Venetian and Ottoman castles. He notes the fortifications with *blocchi regolari ben squadriati*, but does not speculate about their antiquity. These walls led him to believe that this might well be the site of ancient *Buthrotum*, a place described in the sources. But he allows for an element of uncertainty in this identification. Indeed, he dwells first upon Strabo's description of its location and then Virgil's description of the place, concluding that the latter called it lofty while the small hill (at Butrint) is less than 60 m high. By contrast, Ugolini's report includes a long detailed account of 'Feniki' which he identifies with the '*la più potente, e la più ricca città dell'Epiro*' in Hellenistic times, following Polybius's description, and on the basis of his field notes, a town that continued to be important in Roman and even early Byzantine times. This 1924 survey shows that Ugolini's preferred site for an excavation by the Italian Archaeological Mission was Phoinike because the ancient remains were clearly evident; at Butrint, however, the medieval and Ottoman presence complicated the prospect of discovering the ancient city – if, indeed, it really was the site of *Buthrotum*. Virgil's shadow temporarily, at least, had lost its gravitational pull.

This was soon to change. By 1927 the Italian government was getting into its ideological stride. Benito Mussolini, the *Duce*, sought to associate Italy's origins with the unified Imperial world of the Emperor Augustus, and focused of course on Rome. Central to Fascist doctrine was the theory of *Romanità*, which

postulated and celebrated a dialectic between the classical and modern worlds. Archaeology, not surprisingly, was instrumental to this issue, providing justification for the policies of the Fascist government at home as well as abroad. Being a member of the Fascist Party, Ugolini must have been well aware of the ideological importance of his work. The opportunity in 1927 to bring his mission in Albania into the forefront of the Italian government's ideological thinking must have appeared too good to miss. The bi-millennium of Virgil's birth, 1930, was just three years away. As Gilkes and Miraj put it: 'the brief sojourn of Aeneas at the city [Butrint] en route for Italy was an attractive element that was fitted to the precepts of *Romanità*' (Gilkes and Miraj 2000: 114).

Encouraged by Ugolini, Butrint was scheduled to be one destination of the prestigious *Crociera Virgiliana* of 1929, sponsored by the Royal Academy of Italy. These celebrations, which connected the myth of Aeneas's visit to Butrint, further provided a justification for Italian cultural (and political) intervention in Albania. In other words, the serendipity of the political and local circumstances, persuaded Ugolini – a prehistorian not a classicist by training – that shifting his mission's attention from the archaeology of a Hellenistic city to a Roman one as promoted by Caesar, Augustus and Virgil, would be signally advantageous and help him to procure resources from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and further his career (Figure 2.4).

Only after Ugolini returned to Butrint in 1928 and began excavating what he assumed to be a Roman basilica on the lower slope facing the Vivari Channel (which in fact turned out to be a Hellenistic theatre), did the town begin to appear to be as archaeologically promising as Phoinike (Gilkes and Miraj 2000: 117) (Figure 2.5). Indeed Ugolini proceeded, with the support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to artfully shape the story of Butrint as (Virgil's) Troy, consciously seeking to emulate Heinrich Schliemann's skilful promotion of the importance of Mycenae. With a stilted rewriting of his own experiences, he hitched his destiny to Virgil:

Con una commozione più intensa di quella provata commentando Omero sulle rovine di Micene, ora, io, sull'acropoli di Butrinto, da me scoperta e scavata, leggo Virgilio.

Ugolini 1937: 12

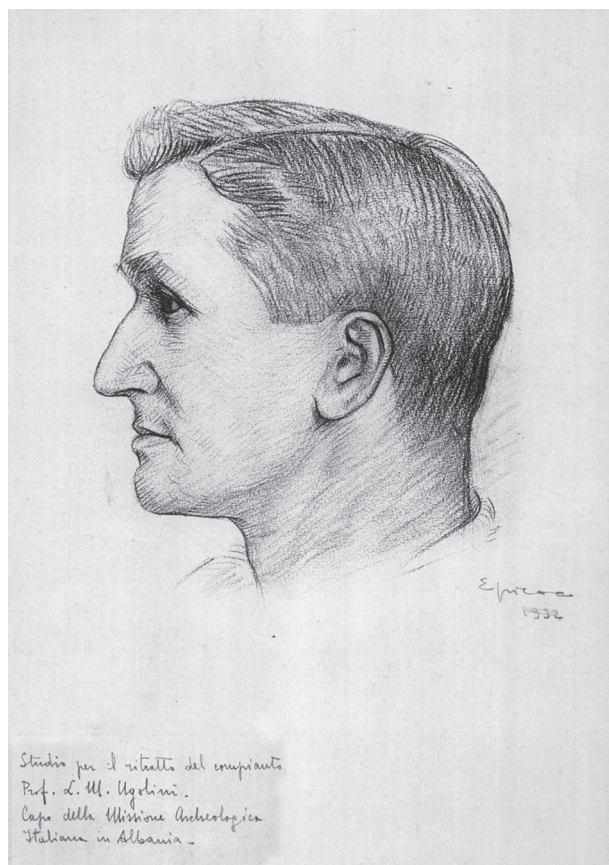


Figure 2.4 Portrait of Luigi Maria Ugolini, drawn by Igeno Epicoco.

At a stroke Butrint, in this nascent borderland of road-free southern Albania, became a place, a destination once more. Ugolini, as a result, joined the pantheon of archaeological placemakers, shaping Butrint to the myth of Aeneas, when much of its archaeology and history, in fact, relates not to the age of Aeneas but to its modest role in the later Byzantine and Venetian ages. After his early death in 1936 aged 41, his colleagues erected a bronze statue to this politically adroit man, positioning it by a new museum that linked the myth of Aeneas to the finds and thereby depicted an altogether different history.

No one knows how long the statue remained in place. From 1944, with a communist government and periods of self-imposed isolation, Butrint once again became a non-place in a borderland, off-limits to ordinary Albanians.



Figure 2.5 Ugolini's excavations of the theatre area, c. 1928.

This changed suddenly when the dictator Enver Hoxha decided to show the ruins to Nikita Khrushchev in May 1959 (Hodges 2009). Hoxha arranged for a road to be built to Butrint for the first time, and recalled cynically that Khrushchev was interested in it only as a military base (Figure 2.6). Quixotically Hoxha thought otherwise. Had he tired of being a minion of the Soviets and decided, after building the road, that a nuclear submarine base at Butrint was beyond his administrative reach? Instead, the Soviet leader's visit had other knock-on effects. The new road facilitated the making of collective farms in this frontier zone. Working to a Chinese plan, Czech engineers drained the marshes, preparing the ground for cereals and in effect creating a new landscape. The new road also enabled the government to bring in small groups of tourists, who paid for their trip in much-needed hard currency. From the 1960s, renewed archaeological surveys and excavations began on a small scale, though Ugolini's legacy was subsumed to new discoveries (perhaps because no one possessed his publications) and his statue was removed. Virgil's shadow may have enticed foreign visitors, but its western bourgeois message, associated with the fascists, was defiantly ignored by Albanian archaeologists



Figure 2.6 Nikita Khrushchev's visit to Butrint with Enver Hoxha, May 1959.

who focused instead upon Butrint as a timeless fortification in a country with a bunker mentality quite literally accentuated by the construction of 600,000 bunkers.

The task of Albania's historians and archaeologists was to construct a systematic and well-documented Albanian past (Bowden and Hodges 2004). In order to counter the territorial claims of surrounding powers (notably Greece, Italy and Yugoslavia), the principal objective was to prove that the Albanians had inhabited their country from the most ancient of times. To this end, the main line of research supported by the authorities was to shape an origin myth about the Illyrians, with particular emphasis on their ethnogenesis and their ethnic and cultural links with the modern Albanian population. Signal importance was attached to their social structures, especially with relation to a Marxist view of historical development.

Enver Hoxha himself articulated this in a speech at Shkodra in 1979 (later published on his death in the national periodical, *Iliria*):

We are the descendants of the Illyrian tribes. Into the land of our ancestors have come the Greeks, the Romans, the Normans, the Slavs, the Angevins,

the Byzantines, the Venetians, the Ottomans and numerous other invaders, without having been able to destroy the Albanian people, the ancient Illyrian civilisation and later the Albanians.

Hoxha 1985: 40

A version of this was cast in metal as a sign, placed above the museum at Butrint (Figure 2.7), perhaps causing the damnation of the bronze statue of Luigi Maria Ugolini. The sign pronounced: 'Besides the Greek and Roman cultures, another ancient culture developed and prospered here. The Illyrian culture' (Hodges 2013).

Hoxha invested in archaeologists throughout the fifty-year history of his regime. In the 1950s the first generation was trained in the Soviet Union. These archaeologists introduced new standards during the subsequent decade and trained a second generation who were shaped to Hoxha's nationalist goals; at the same time, as in the case of Butrint, they laid the foundations of a cultural heritage tourism for Communist Party tourists from western countries in order to gain hard currencies. In 1988, while there were bread-lines in the capital, the Institute of Archaeology boasted forty-eight field missions. As Herzfeld has commented more generally: 'the whole goal of the state is to produce a sense of timelessness. Actually, I've often remarked that Lévi-Strauss's definition of myths as machines for the suppression of time is really most applicable to nationalist historiography' (in conversation with Byrne 2011: 150). Of course, Albanian archaeology was shaped by limited theoretical goals, limited methodological techniques and above all, by a government that actively restricted local economic growth. The photographs of the Institute of Archaeology's missions in the 1960s reveal the same heady machismo of western archaeologists venturing into 'the Other'. The difference, this time, was

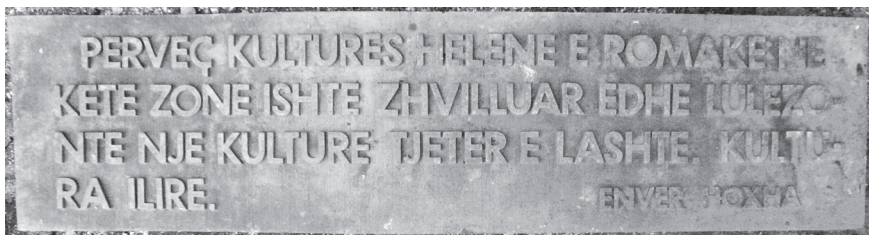


Figure 2.7 Plaque commemorating Enver Hoxha's (1979) speech about the Illyrians.

that ‘the Other’ was represented by regions of Albania inhabited by poorly educated peasants.

The first Albanian archaeologists to work at Butrint were captivated by its otherness as a place in this borderland (beyond the Albanian customs post situated at the north end of Lake Butrint). It connoted a hyperreal freedom from state oversight in Tirana as well as, we might conjecture, a strange tournament of value, in Appadurai’s terms. The ritual of digging within a cult place defined by Ugolini’s earlier explorations marked these archaeologists as special, a scientific sect endorsed by the regime.

Given, therefore, Albania’s obsession with fortification, as an isolated country at odds with most European countries, it is hardly surprising that it was Butrint’s well-preserved defences that caught the imagination of the next generation to work here. Muzafer Korkuti, long-time Director of the Institute of Archaeology, put it explicitly as follows: ‘The Albanians built castles ... to defend themselves from the attacks which came from all directions’ (Korkuti 1971: 1). Between the late 1960s and early 1980s, Apollon Baçe, Neritan Ceka and Gjerak Karaiskaj all published studies laying great emphasis upon the long sequence of fortifications beginning in the Archaic Greek era and ending in the Ottoman age (Baçe 1976; Ceka 1976, 1988; Karaiskaj 1983, 2009). Added to this, while many small-scale excavations were made, only one of substance was undertaken and published – by Kosta Lako in 1975–76 – and this too concentrated upon the fortifications (Lako 1981). (The only other major studies published in this era were by Aleksandër Meksi, who had made architectural surveys of the Great Basilica and Baptistery (Meksi 1983).) Excavation was a ritual unsupported by scientific reporting; the finite character of the resource was never considered. Instead the task was to affirm pre-determined conclusions for the purposes of promoting the state.

Making the place: conservation at Butrint before 1992

The history of conservation at Butrint was less rooted in ideology. In January 1928, when Ugolini began his excavations, the visible monuments were in a poor condition. Of course, little that can be seen today was then on view;

at that time the acropolis of Butrint was a winter encampment for Vlach shepherds and the shore around the promontory was used by fishermen (Ugolini 1937: fig. 55; Hodges 2006: 50). Neither group, though, constructed anything substantial on the ancient site. Indeed, there had been no construction since the final abandonment of the old Venetian town in the early eighteenth century in favour of the Triangular Castle on the south side of the Vivari Channel. The absence of modern building made Ugolini's task comparatively straightforward. Just as helpful to him, in contrast to Butrint today, the vegetation was less developed with the promontory only partially covered by shrubs and low trees. The woodland matured after the Second World War and had become a distinctive feature of the place by the time Khrushchev visited in May 1959. Ugolini's goal was to make Butrint a place on the celebrated journey described by Virgil in the *Aeneid* on the route from Troy to Rome. Making the archaeological remains accessible was essential to his mission (Ugolini 1937: 12; Gilkes 2003b; Miraj 2003). From 1928 until 1936, when he died unexpectedly, Ugolini and the Italian Archaeological Mission transformed Butrint into Albania's first cultural heritage attraction. After Ugolini, successive directors of the Italian Archaeological Mission sustained the programme until the war brought the project to an end in 1941. From August 1930 Ugolini excavated on a large scale, using small railway wagons mounted on a railway line to remove the overburden covering the monuments around the ancient theatre (Gilkes 2003a: 56; Miraj 2003: 32). Elsewhere he excavated in sizeable trenches, exposing whole monuments. Central to his mission was the presentation of the excavated monuments. Several members of his team were familiar with conservation and construction: these included his deputy, the artist, Igino Epicocco, the architect, Carlo Ceschi, and his junior archaeologist and engineer, who ultimately succeeded Ugolini, Dario Roversi Monaco. Giacomo Franz, assisted by Alfredo Nuccitelli, managed the large teams of local workmen, overseeing the excavations and conservation. This team transformed the remains on a remote hill into presentable ruins: the Hellenistic and Roman theatre and many other buildings were consolidated sensitively and in some cases partially, though discreetly, rebuilt (Gilkes 2003b: 10). Only the Byzantine and later Despot castle on the acropolis was dismantled and initially under Ceschi's direction and then Epicocco's, completely rebuilt, making it more of a picture-book Italianate donjon. By contrast, the Great

Basilica was left unroofed; only the columns of the Baptistery were erected in place (Bowden and Përzhita 2004b: fig. 10:4); the nymphaeum was conserved and partially rebuilt, as were the fortifications of different periods. Ugolini's conservators, the Vetranno brothers from Rome, cleaned and consolidated the exceptionally well-preserved sixth-century mosaic floor of the Baptistery as well as the late antique fresco above the earlier well of Junia Rufina. By comparison with contemporary practice in Italy (see, for example, Ostia), Ugolini's interventions were limited and essentially intended to make each building comprehensible to the visitor. Possibly, this strategy was imposed upon him by the availability of conservators, masons and materials in this singularly poor region. Nevertheless, the quality of Ugolini's work – like his records – was outstanding for the time, and as a result the monuments were in a good state of repair, following almost twenty years of inattention, when the Institute of Archaeology systematically tidied up Butrint for Khrushchev's visit in May 1959 (Hodges 2009).

After the Second World War, and up until 1991, Butrint was situated in a frontier no-man's-land for which permission was required to make a visit. Not surprisingly, given Albania's post-war poverty, there were no excavations at Butrint between 1945 and 1959, but with Khrushchev's visit to the site a new cycle of excavations was started by Dhimosten Budina, who had been trained in the Soviet Union. Facilitated by the road to the site built for the Soviet leader's visit, Butrint was the southernmost stop on an itinerary for guided tours of communist Albania, as Eric Newby describes in his *On the Shores of the Mediterranean* (1984: 133). It was the bathers – families from the communist elite – in western swimsuits, rather than the archaeology which struck him.

Effectively now considered as a park, like the Graeco-Roman remains of ancient Apollonia near Fier, a concrete fence was erected around the western side of the site. Beyond this, after Ramiz Alia (Hoxha's successor) visited in 1986, was a small café with concrete seats and tables dotted discreetly around in the woodland. Inside, a paved trail was made by Budina around the monuments for Khrushchev's visit and was regularly upgraded thereafter. The excavations and accompanying surveys, now made exclusively by Albanian archaeologists and architectural conservators between the 1960s and 1991, were with one exception – Lako's investigation of the Hellenistic wall undertaken between 1975 and 1976 – transacted on a small scale (Hodges 2013: fig. 1.4) (see Pani 1976 on the

conservation strategy). For the most part, the documentation of these digs was minimal, and the record of conservation as a result was likewise negligible. The Instituti i Monumenteve të Kulturës (hereafter the Institute of Monuments, a section of the Ministry of Culture with an office at Saranda) was now responsible for the management of the archaeological site and followed an explicitly nationalist ideology in the management and conservation of Albanian monuments (cf. Kosta 1986). The Institute's premier role was to promote the well-preserved, multi-period fortifications, illustrating the nation's long history of defiance against aggressors as well as, once Albania began to encourage controlled tourism, its range of well-maintained monuments. At Apollonia, for example, the Institute pioneered the partial reconstruction of monuments. The bouleuterion was largely rebuilt with concrete in 1976 and a triumphal arch was reconstructed (cf. Ceka 2005: 39). At Butrint the ethos was less ambitious and therefore less invasive, thanks to the sensitive management of a series of local overseers of works, the last of whom, from the late 1970s, was the surveyor, Telemark Llakana. All the monuments uncovered and restored by Ugolini were stabilized and restored, mostly using local lime mortar. Steel scaffolding with timber frames was now deployed to work on most monuments, the scaffolding and timber being imported to the site by trucks using the new road. The Institute of Monuments' architect responsible for Butrint was Guri Pani. Among his most ambitious projects was the partial restoration to its full height of the *scena frons* of the Theatre excavated by Ugolini. Pani also drew up plans for reconstructing parts of the ancient civic centre including the temples (1988a) and stoa but none of these were pursued (Pani 1988b). For a time small pumps were deployed to drain the water filling the *cavea* of the Theatre, but otherwise recourse to technical support was minimal as the supply of electricity to the ruins was intermittent. Pani's colleague, Aleksandër Meksi, later Prime Minister from 1992 to 1997, was responsible in the 1980s for the restoration of the Great Basilica, the Baptistery and the Triangular Castle. The overall visual impact of the Institute's conservation policy at Butrint, in contrast to its work at Apollonia, was minimal. Part of this programme involved subjecting the woodland to systematic management, restricting the prodigious and invasive growth of the low vegetation that was especially threatening to the defensive walls.

Forty years afterwards, however, without a detailed record, it is difficult to distinguish the restoration work by the different missions from what was

original. Unlike Ugolini, however, who transported the soil from his excavations either to the Vivari Channel or beyond the Western Defences, the Albanian excavators mostly deposited the removed soil beside the open excavations. In this period all the mosaic pavements were also stabilized, following the practice of the Italian Mission. By contrast, with limited technical resources the Institute were unable to stabilize and protect the frescoes, most of which had been found by Ugolini: the late antique fresco in the arcosolium above the well of Junia Rufina; the later medieval frescoes in the church above the stoa; and the frescoes of the late medieval chapel by the north citadel wall, near Lake Gate (at the west end of the acropolis).

In 1991, with the breakdown of the communist state as the Republic of Albania became a democracy, the Institute of Monuments was unable to sustain its workforce at Butrint. Only its local officer, Llakana, was retained with negligible operational resources.

World Heritage inscription

In 1988, after a hiatus of almost half a century, a foreign team was again granted the opportunity to dig at Butrint. The Greek archaeologist, Kati Hadjis, in collaboration with the leading Albanian archaeologist of his era, Neritan Ceka, was drawn to a campaign of excavations on the acropolis by Ugolini's publications and, indirectly, seeking to define some exactitude for the Virgilian origins of Butrint. Could Virgil have been half-right; could there have been a Bronze Age palace resembling Mycenae or Pylos on this hilltop? Hadjis's excavations remain mostly unpublished, but her legacy is surely to be detected in the inscription of the ancient port as a Unesco World Heritage site in 1992 (see Chapter 3).

The 1972 Unesco World Heritage Convention was established as a new provision for the international and collective protection of heritage with outstanding universal value. It recognized the increasing threats to natural and cultural sites coupled with traditional conservation challenges. However, as Lynn Meskell has brilliantly illustrated, the convention has become more than a global brand:

Indeed, I suggest that the convention's original mandate to protect and conserve the world's most important cultural and natural heritage places has

been largely replaced by an international desire for securing and mobilisation of that brand. Attaining World Heritage status and recognition, and keeping it, is now the primary task of the Committee and has become, literally and figuratively, business as usual. The notion of UNESCO branding has been studied from various disciplinary perspectives, most often through tourism, site management and international politics. However, research might also be focused on the process itself as a system of diplomatic exchanges and symbolic gifts between nations and their representatives, between members of UNESCO's Advisory Bodies and their cohort of evaluators, as well as between individuals and consultants who operate within these different networks.

Meskel 2015: 7

In the midst of the political jockeying at Unesco, it is not surprising that Virgil played no part in Butrint's inscription, as we shall see in Chapter 3 (possibly because the Bronze Age palace simply could not be found). Instead Ugolini's shadow is readily recognizable: (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/570>). The Unesco inscription belongs to the acute moment of transition from communism to democracy: its main monuments are patently transposed to sustain a Greek national myth, pertinent to southern Albania's Greek minority released from a totalitarianism that began in 1913–14. Butrint's Hellenic antiquity was championed; its Roman heritage was acknowledged and its Ottoman heritage was dismissed (cf. Davis 2000). The real nub of the 1992 inscription, though, is more probably that the site was fast-tracked through the paperwork to speed up the promise of more tourists and more development than had been possible in the national isolation between the 1960s and 1990. Who fast-tracked it remains lost in the transition, but it is hard not to believe that Unesco was persuaded by the commodification of the place. Certainly, the Greek minority, now given new status with democracy, took control of Saranda and its hinterland, as they had in 1913–14. Did this matter? No mention was made in the Unesco inscription, of course, of its remarkable location. Once globally branded, it was an obvious attraction for investors in the post-communist vacuum looking for somewhere to build quintessential vacation resorts, non-places. In this way Albania would catch up with its Mediterranean peer countries in exploiting its sea and sun.

Meanwhile, in the near anarchic frenzy that accompanied the collapse of communism in 1991–92, Albania's beleaguered archaeologists gauged that

Butrint's combination of spirit of place and its history might attract investigations that promised better rewards (honoraria, fellowships abroad, international congresses and connections). That was the tacit expectation behind the invitation to two British lords, renowned for their philanthropy in the arts, to launch a project at Butrint. The two philanthropists were motivated both by a desire to assist Albania as well as the romantic opportunity to investigate the archaeological riches of a quintessential Mediterranean Graeco-Roman port and its hinterland.

One of their friends, the historian, Lord Norwich, summed up the essence of the place at this time, subsuming Virgil to the modern experience: 'Of all the great classical sites of the Mediterranean, Butrint is the least known, the least frequented and the least spoilt. Visiting it today must be very like visiting Ephesus or Baalbek a hundred years ago: no car parks, no souvenir stalls, no sound but the sound of birds and the ever-busy crickets. If you yearn to lose yourself in romantic meditation, alone among the ruins of a once-great city, then Butrint is the place for you' (Norwich 1999: 5). Butrint, Norwich grasped with his romantic gaze, possessed an authenticity – an unmistakable spirit of place (see Chapter 5). This was and is its priceless brand, appropriated from a curious confection of Mediterranean history, with a landscape manufactured unwittingly for communist purposes that serves the pleasure of today's tourists that want to de-materialize a place.

New Identity? An Excavated Narrative

Public activism by archaeologists seems to offer the most obvious path forward. The ways in which we choose to present our research to others matter. Rather than the platter of simplistic models of culture history and culture change that has passed for common table fare in much popular archaeological prose, archaeologists should strive to share with the general public the complexities surrounding archaeological interpretations. We should attempt to make it clear to non-professionals that monolithic answers supplied by nationalist archaeological projects are not unequivocal. In their place we can offer an appreciation of the myriad of ways in which nations of Europe have been woven through time from disparate threads of languages and cultures into resplendent, if sometime delicate, tapestries of traditions.

Davis 2000: 90

. . . there's monumental time, which is the time of the state, and then there's social time, which is the time of ordinary people . . . [A]rchaeology gives a much longer time depth, and therefore provides the instruments of both legitimization and serious subversion.

Byrne 2011: 150 (quoting Michael Herzfeld)

The Unesco inscription released Butrint from the jaws of communism, or at least that was the tacit intention. It goes as follows: 'Inhabited since prehistoric times, Butrint has been the site of a Greek colony, a Roman city and a bishopric. Following a period of prosperity under Byzantine administration, then a brief occupation by the Venetians, the city was abandoned in the late Middle Ages after marshes formed in the area' (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/570>). In one bound, in 1992 this Albanian archaeological site joined a global heritage club. With this came branding: it connoted a network of excellence as well as place in

the making of humanity. The inscription makes no mention of Virgil, although the scheduled ruins themselves, as we have seen, were mostly unearthed as a result of Luigi Maria Ugolini's contrived desire to serve the Italian government's needs in Albania by associating Butrint with the *Aeneid*. The Unesco inscription described the remains within the fortification walls of Butrint, which coincided at this time with the park made by the Albanian authorities in the 1960s soon after Nikita Khrushchev's visit in 1959. But the brand, encapsulated in the interpretive details of the inscription, plainly speaks to the local Greek minority interests with its emphasis upon a Greek colony, the bishopric and the Byzantine administration (cf. Cameron 2014: 48). No such colony was known to exist and, of course, the Ottoman heritage went unmentioned. The agency for this inscription was surely not Albanian but the Greek minority of Epirus Vetus.

In 1991, with the end of communism, the Greek minority in south-west Albania had again the hopes of the independence they briefly enjoyed in 1913–14 (cf. Hodges forthcoming). To them, Butrint was a prize, a talismanic Greek heritage site. Did the World Heritage Committee of Unesco understand the century-old politics of Epirus, and the sub-text of their inscription? One can only wonder at their motives for inscribing this fragile site in the chaos and near anarchic circumstances that engulfed Albania in 1991–92 with the birth pangs of democracy (cf. Meskell 2015).

In practice, any visitor to Butrint in the early 1990s was immediately captivated by the floating landscape around the archaeological site – between the Straits of Corfu and Lake Butrint – and by the serene otherness of the woodland site itself with its combination of butterflies, flowers and ancient remains (Figure 3.1). It was an oasis beyond the frenzy of new building, the wanton destruction of collective farms, and the ubiquitous rubbish. Unesco's inscription was extraordinarily misleading; it focused upon Butrint's heritage status, whereas its obvious reality was its environmental context, its 'Homeric setting', contrived because it was located in a strictly controlled borderland with minimal modern development. It belonged to a country that had not yet experienced mass tourism and thus, unlike Greece and much of the Balkans and Italy, destroyed its coastline with non-places.

Of course, the miracle of a place untarnished by surrounding resorts was pretty obvious to most everyone. This combination of natural idyll with the myth of Aeneas held an immediate gravitational pull for those Albanians now released from the command economy. It offered multiple ways of earning a



Figure 3.1 'Homeric landscape': a flock of sheep on the Vrina Plain, below Kalivo.

living from obvious tourist development opportunities around the site including archaeological tourism. An obvious challenge from the outset for the Butrint Foundation in 1993 was to establish Butrint's identity not just as a brand. Journalists were attracted to the odd alchemy of English lords, exotic Albania after the fall of the dictator with its many eccentricities, and the likelihood of treasures at Butrint. Our aim was specifically to focus upon Butrint as a historic place within an imperiled Mediterranean environmental setting, situating it appropriately to a genuinely global audience (cf. Braudel 1972).

So in 1993 the Butrint Foundation was confronted by three interpretations of the ancient town, none of which might safeguard this as a place:

1. Ugolini's diachronic account of uninterrupted continuity, viewed through the prism of Virgil's *Aeneid*: Butrint as a sanctuary site that prospered as a Roman colony, as a late antique town, and as a medieval and Ottoman port.
2. The communist diachronic account that gave profile to its Illyrian connections, and its long resistance as a fortified place to numerous colonialists from Julius Caesar onwards.

3. The Unesco inscription which championed Butrint's Greek origins and Byzantine phases, tacitly to serve the Greek minority and their 1913–14 cause for independence of Epirus Vetus (cf. Herzfeld 2002). This is an example of the interpretive platter to which Davis (2000), cited at the beginning, is referring.

We aimed to use new archaeological research to provide Butrint with a fourth identity, based upon its Mediterranean connectivity (shorn of nationalism) thereby making the place more accessible to international visitors. Its identity, we believed, needed to possess a contemporary academic and popular currency. David Abulafia has summed up this Mediterraneanism:

The unity of Mediterranean history thus lies, paradoxically, in its swirling changeability, in the diasporas of merchants and exiles, in the people hurrying to cross its surface as quickly as possible, not seeking to linger at sea, especially in winter, when travel becomes dangerous. Its opposing shores are close enough to permit easy contact, but far enough apart to allow societies to develop distinctively under the influence of their hinterland as well as of one another. Those who cross its surface are often hardly typical of the societies from which they come (if the word 'typical' has any meaning anyway). If they are not outsiders, in some sense decentered, when they set out, they are likely to become so when they enter different societies across the water, whether as traders, slaves, or pilgrims, but their presence can have a transforming effect on these different societies, introducing something of the culture of one continent into the outer edges, at least, of another.

2011: 648

Of course, this identity had to make sense to the international visitorship inhabiting the non-places (vacation resorts) of Corfu as well as to the Albanians released from fifty years of totalitarianism and the apparently timeless myth of the Illyrians.

A new narrative: field strategies and serendipity

Placemakers across the ages carry their own cultural baggage. Archaeologists from Heinrich Schliemann onwards are no exceptions. The Butrint Foundation team came with its own western, largely Anglo-Saxon traditions, which were

overtly positivist about deploying field methods to construct a diachronic past. The team possessed a cultural antipathy to nationalist models, and by contrast a willingness to champion internationalism based upon post-war Mediterranean archaeological research. Seeking a new identity for Butrint, it seemed from the beginning, was essentially dependent upon discovering the archaeological and environmental remains and measuring these against the different parameters from contemporary central Mediterranean contexts. Lend Butrint a new international identity as an archaeological site, we reasoned, and it will strengthen its defence as a place and protect its hinterland from the imminent menace of the paladins vending the promise of new marine resorts, non-places. Whether we were correct or not to assume the role of arbiters in the future of this site (and therefore the local economy), we nonetheless embarked upon the task of producing a paradigm to explain Butrint's importance in an era when Virgil and even Aeneas (and the Classics in general) possess very limited gravitational pull. Whether, too, the new narrative – a master narrative – is really a narrative in the first place, is a postmodern question that begs analysis in the future. (No archaeologist can buck the issue posed by Jameson: 'whether the present is to be seen as a historical originality or as the simple prolongation of more of the same under different sheep's clothing – is not an empirically justifiable or philosophically arguable one, since it is itself the inaugural narrative act that grounds the perception and interpretation of the events to be narrated' (2005: xii–xiii).)

Our proposed master narrative converges, of course, with a contemporary, post-communist narrative. How did a critically located port on a significant seaway adapt to the changing historical circumstances governing the Mediterranean? Situated at the southern end of the Adriatic Sea, its harbours – to judge from the Roman and later medieval sources (cf. Soustal 2004) – served shipping making for the Adriatic littorals and south-east Italy in particular, as well as southern Italy as far west as Sicily. The first excavator of Butrint, Luigi Maria Ugolini, Director of the Italian Archaeological Mission, identified the oscillating connectivity between Butrint and its immediate region and southern Italy, although in Ugolini's case demonstrating the ancient connections between Butrint and Italy was also shaped to the political conditions in which he operated (Gilkes 2003b: 23), as noted in Chapter 2. The challenge for the Butrint Foundation team was to confront the question of the

changing nature of a Mediterranean port not through the study of isolated monuments in the context of an established narrative, but through defining and explaining generational changes in the urban fabric of the city. This needed to be based upon the stratigraphical (archaeological) sequences within the town and its associated hinterland, and their relationship to monuments and objects. At stake was how did Butrint function as a place over *la longue durée*? This involved documenting and interpreting the stratigraphy and the associated finds, archiving and storing these for future generations. Documenting Butrint's environmental context as well as the history of settlement in its sub-region was equally essential to comprehending the history of the town (Figure 3.2).

Our project began by reviewing the previous studies of Butrint, principally the work of the 1928–40 Italian Archaeological Mission and, to a lesser extent, the miscellany of poorly recorded post-war communist excavations. Collecting these data took us to archives at Rome and Tirana, and involved interviewing the archaeologists who had participated in these earlier projects. As it happened, almost no stratigraphic records from pre-1992 were published, and most reports from these Italian and early Albanian excavations pay little attention to associated finds. Instead, the interpretation of Butrint's long history before 1992 rested primarily upon positivist interpretations of the monuments, artistic, epigraphic and largely undated topographic elements found at the site. These earlier excavations, as we have seen already, were undertaken with explicit nationalist motives. No less significantly, large areas within Butrint had been excavated by teams of local workmen but very little of the excavated evidence (site drawings and stratigraphic details) was reported upon and the associated finds were largely lost (cf. Gilkes 2003a; Francis 2005).

Given the privileged opportunity to investigate all parts of the city and its associated landscape, our strategy was comparatively straightforward (notwithstanding the problems with our collaborators described in Chapter 4). We began with several concurrent surveys: a new topographical survey of the ancient city; a new survey of its main standing monuments; a survey of the environmental context; a traditional field survey of Butrint's immediate surrounding territory including the Vrina Plain drained by dykes installed in the 1960s; and a survey of the archival sources in Albania and Italy. We also



Figure 3.2 Recording the Archaic, Roman and medieval phases of the south side of the acropolis walls, 2006.

launched a series of small excavations at selective points in the city agreed with our collaborators, the Institute of Archaeology (beside the Baptistery; in an adjacent Nymphaeum; in an extra-mural cemetery area; and in the Triconch Palace) to investigate the stratigraphical resources (Figure 3.3).



Figure 3.3 The conserved outlines of the early fifth-century Triconch Palace, beside the Vivari Channel.

Our point of departure for the excavation methodology was Martin Carver's thoughtful *Arguments in Stone* (1993) that readily assumed (as we did) that a north European methodology (based upon north European historiographic traditions) might be readily translated to a Mediterranean context. As in many similar projects, such an assumption was soon to be dispelled. First, our Albanian collaborators had their own historical paradigm, designed to sustain a (communist) national myth that took no account of contemporary historiography (Bowden and Hodges 2004). Second, although our approach involved sampling on a major scale, identifying stratigraphic deposits as predicated by Carver's method, this was complicated by Butrint's dense tree cover, by the seasonal oscillation of the water table, and most of all by the realization that only open-area excavation with a substantial commitment to labour and post-excavation analysis offers a suitable instrument for interpreting inter-period and intra-settlement topographical differentiations across time.

Carver proposed small-scale excavations to solve specific problems of largely-known urban topography, together with computer-generated simulations known as 'deposit modelling' between excavated samples. Problems of residuality, the repeated remodelling and re-use of structures throughout

the Roman and medieval periods, and the large-scale secondary movement of deposits in antiquity (during construction work and terracing), meant that the results of keyhole archaeology were inconclusive at best and totally misleading at worst. As a result, our initial investigations from 1994–99, summarized in *Byzantine Butrint* (Hodges, Bowden, Gilkes and Lako 2004), increased an understanding of Butrint but provided an imprecise overview of the town and its changing topography.

Many projects would have halted after this extensive range of investigations but, with support from the Packard Humanities Institute, from 2000 to 2009 we developed a constellation of major excavations. Large excavations were opened in the ancient civic centre (Hernandez and Çondi 2008), at the Triconch Palace to review a waterside sector of the city (Bowden and Hodges 2011), in the bridgehead *vicus* on the Vrina Plain (Greenslade 2013) and at the lakeside villa at Diaporit, identified in the field survey 4 km north-east of Butrint (Bowden and Përzhita 2004a). With a combination of other small excavations (including the Western Defences, the Bapistery area, around the Great Basilica, at the well of Junia Rufina and, lastly, on the acropolis), the area of the project's excavation trenches covered approximately 8,250 m².

These excavations, supported in particular by the remarkable knowledge and dedication of our ceramic specialists, provided us with a new understanding of the settlement history of Butrint from its earliest occupation until the Ottoman age. Plainly, some of this approach evolved strategically to confront different period-based paradigms. For example, the seventh- to twelfth-century AD history was enhanced not always as a result of judgements taken to identify these periods but by serendipity, in that key discoveries relating to the Byzantine Dark Ages have occurred more by accident than design (Kamani 2013; Greenslade and Hodges 2013; cf. Hodges 2015a)). How, we need to ask, are we to interpret this serendipity – bearing in mind, of course, that the same serendipity for the most part has determined the survival of the historical texts that form the framework for this period (Bowden and Hodges 2012)?

Serendipity entered into the selection of places to investigate as the chance arose to excavate a limited area in the centre of Butrint with a view to finding the Roman forum. Further opportunities then followed: first, to explore a section of the acropolis prior to backfilling and landscaping the 1990–94 excavations as well as the eastern summit prior to landscaping (Greenslade,

Leppard and Logue 2013); second, to excavate ahead of conservation of the Western Defences (Kamani 2013) and third, to investigate an area adjacent to the well of Junia Rufina beside the northern postern gate, known as the Lion Gate (Sebastiani *et al.* 2013). Based upon these new excavations, we have re-examined many of the extant main monuments, including the fortifications and the Great Basilica, and in so doing, discovered the remains of a Roman bridge close to the Water Gate. David Hernandez's ongoing excavations in the forum for the University of Notre Dame, following the end of the Butrint Foundation excavations, have also hugely helped to make sense of the earlier discoveries (Hodges 2013).

In sum, a sequence of investigations, initially following a strategy of the kind proposed by Carver, gave rise to chance excavation opportunities, which in turn led to new field strategies. Taken together, these new discoveries permit us to define the topographic history of this place. This gives the familiar monuments and the artworks – statues, mosaics and paintings – contextual meaning. Seeing an early fifth-century mosaic punctured by the simple posts of sixth-century fishermen's timber dwellings, like the post-built structures along one side of the sixth-century Baptistry with its extraordinary pavement brings perspective to the episodic history of the place. Perhaps it is overly academic, but these researches shape the master narrative of Butrint for our times (cf. Lichrou, O' Malley and Patterson 2014). With this, I would contend, we have escaped the shadow of Virgil.

A topographic narrative history

Luigi Maria Ugolini, in the period 1928–36 (before he died suddenly aged 41), and the Albanian archaeologists who intermittently excavated at Butrint between 1945 and 1992, viewed Butrint as continuously occupied from Archaic Greek to Venetian times, acknowledging the changing scale of the town at different points in this continuum. Butrint was eternal until the Ottomans seized and, in effect, closed it, looking inland rather than to the Mediterranean. Ugolini's interpretation rests principally on an interpretation of the texts and architecture, not the archaeology. It also prizes continuity as a principle, perhaps tacitly a nationalist ideal as opposed to the dissonant discontinuities

that certainly, for example, characterize modern Albanian and Italian histories (cf. Hodges 2015a).

The new archaeological evidence assembled by the Butrint Foundation excavation projects points to an altogether different history. It takes its environmental history as axiomatic to the interpretation of its long occupation. It is a platform for a more experiential history, comprising memory and myth.

First, the complex history of the lagoon is only now coming into focus (Lane *et al.* 2004; Morellón *et al.* 2016). The large embayment of later prehistory almost certainly gave rise to fishing opportunities for Middle and Upper Palaeolithic groups whose plentiful lithics have been found at Butrint itself, close to the modern village of Xarra and on the south-east shore of Lake Butrint (Francis 2005). Traces of Neolithic occupation are notably missing. But it is evident that there was still a considerable embayment here during the Middle to Late Bronze Ages, when small communities occupied various prominent hilltop points around the lagoon (cf. Tartaron 2004: 178–212). This changed in the later first millennium BC, during which time the narrow passage known as the Vivari Channel formed along the south side of the promontory that was to be Butrint, opposite it lay the Vrina Plain. This new topography was certainly apparent by the late Republican period if not earlier, and significantly, the Vrina Plain could have been farmed and colonized by the early Imperial period. We must envisage that initially, before the second to first centuries BC, this also meant that the strip of land between the southern course of the later Hellenistic city wall running just south of the sanctuary of Butrint and the Vivari Channel some 80 m further south could not be colonized and occupied. This was a short-lived condition and certainly by the first century AD the early Roman town covered the area seen today. Widespread coastal uplift in the Mediterranean between the fourth and sixth centuries AD, in an episode often known as the Early Byzantine Tectonic Paroxysm (Bescoby 2013), caused uplift of between 0.5 and 1 m on the Ionian islands of Kephallonia and Zakynthos, although it was up to 9 m on Crete. This sort of tectonic movement almost certainly resulted in a wide range of localized variations, however, and it seems the western part of the lower town of Butrint was lowered by earthquakes in the fourth century AD (Hernandez and Çondi 2008: 290). The skirt of land immediately to the south of Butrint's Roman-period forum apparently slumped as a result of tectonic movement (evidenced by the 0.50 m drop on the south side of the forum pavement) (Figure 3.4). From

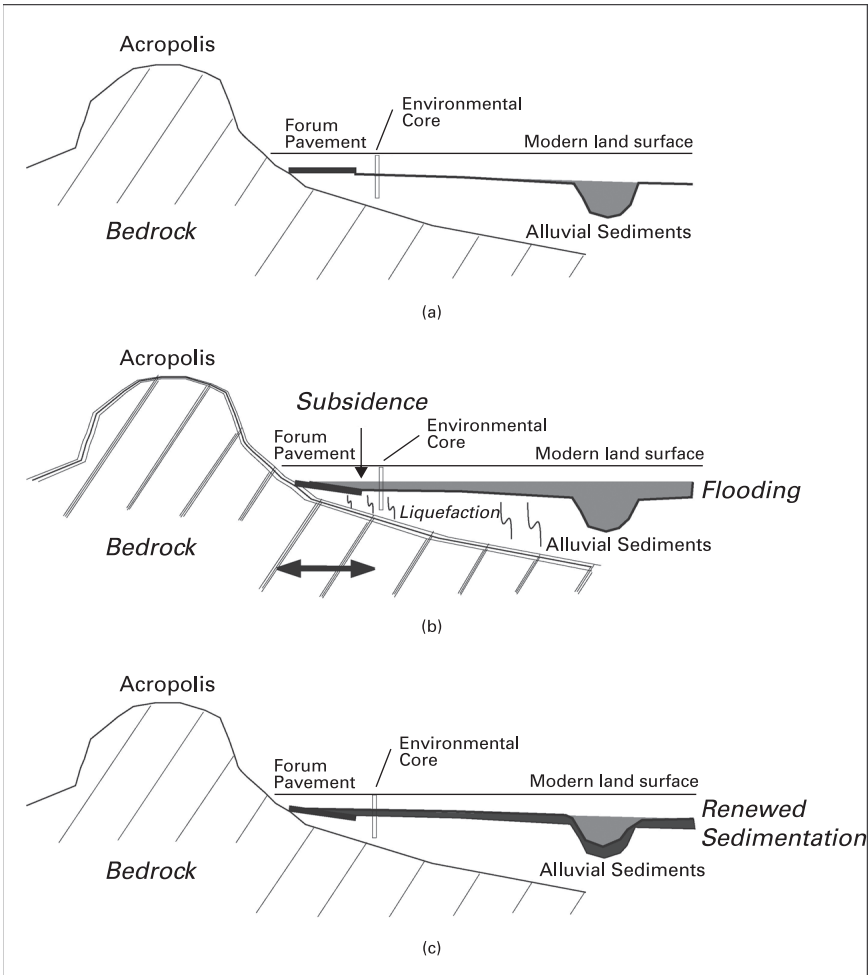


Figure 3.4 A reconstruction chart by David Bescoby of the seismic events in Butrint in the first millennium.

this period onwards the land either side of the Vivari Channel was evidently subjected to seasonal (or at least intermittent) flooding, making settlement on all but the highest points of the Vrina Plain much less tenable. In fact, a small settlement was sustained on the south side of the Vivari Channel at one key point, close to a deep inlet, up until the thirteenth century. Then, at about this time, increasing amounts of colluvium made permanent occupation intolerable (cf. similar circumstances further in south Epirus: Tartaron 2004: 178–212; Wiseman and Zachos 2003: 221–2), as it accelerated the flooding and the steady

transition of this area into the marshes observed by Colonel Martin Leake in 1805 (1835: 95) and photographed by Ugolini in the 1920s (1937: figs 4, 11, 120, 121, 138). Only in the 1960s, with the making of a collective farm at Shën Dëlli one kilometre south of Butrint, was a reclamation system (that included drainage channels and a pumping station) devised to prevent seasonal inundations. This system collapsed in 1992 and since then part of the Vrina Plain has reverted to marshes, which are extensively flooded during the wintertime.

In sum, with the brief exception of the early Roman imperial investment in managed, centuriated farming, this was always a quintessential maritime environment (cf. Hodges *et al.* 2016). It was often inhospitable as a place, yet it has always been exceptionally rich in fishing resources. It was also on a sea-lane, the Straits of Corfu, a major thoroughfare that provided connections to all points across the Mediterranean. Lastly we must note that similar environments punctuate the long eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea, as well as parts of the Italian coastline. With these maritime places, we may envisage, the inhabitants of Butrint from time to time found more commonality, as Abulafia cited earlier presupposes, than perhaps is evident today.

Second, the 1994–96 field survey, followed up intermittently by other surveys made by the Butrint Foundation (Hodges *et al.* 2016), showed that Butrint was only briefly – in the early imperial Roman period – at the centre of a densely managed and occupied landscape (Figure 3.5). Otherwise, in the periods before and after the early Empire, settlement in the immediate vicinity of Butrint was adapted to the minor topographic conditions and often appears to have been ephemeral. In other words Butrint, it can be surmised, was essentially a place focused upon exploiting the lagoonal resources as opposed to systematically establishing itself as an agrarian and a maritime nucleus.

Third, the evolving topography of Butrint is all the more interesting in the light of these environmental circumstances. From the Archaic Greek period until the early Venetian age, two axes appear to have been constant. Thereafter, from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, until the road to Butrint was constructed for Nikita Khrushchev's celebrated visit in May 1959 (Hodges 2009), only one axis served the old town, the Vivari Channel.

Two access points to Butrint were replicated in various forms over more than two millennia. The western access appears to have been along the narrow isthmus that connects the promontory to Mount Sotira (behind the present

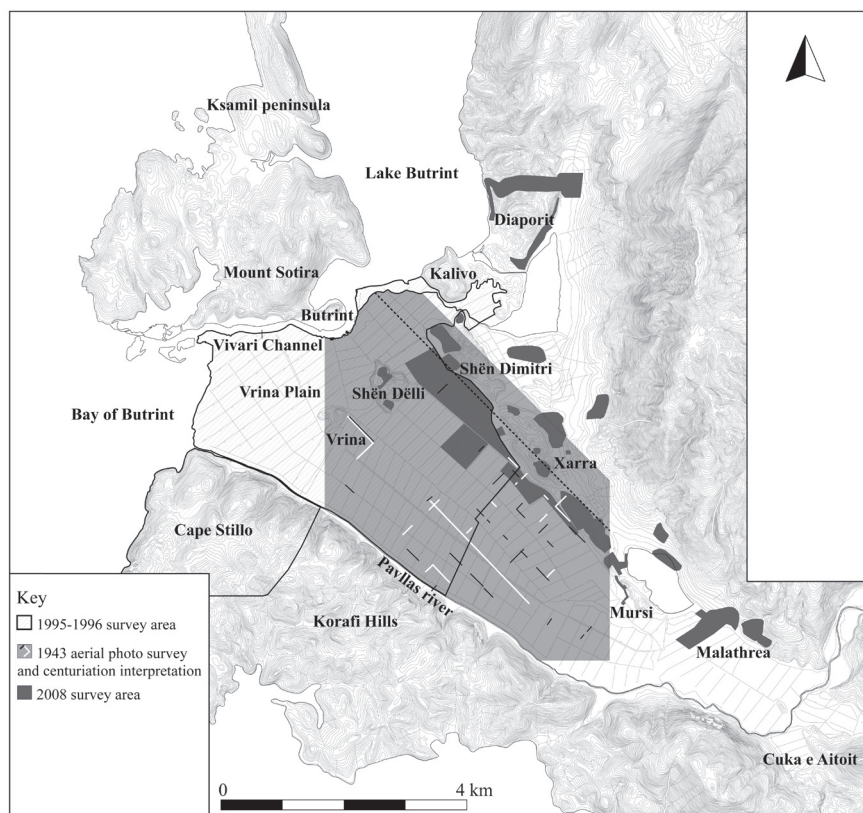


Figure 3.5 A map showing the field surveys: using RAF photographs taken in 1943, as well as the 1995–96 and 2008 surveys.

Livia Hotel). The eastern access was by boat or, during the Roman period, by a multi-arched bridge extending from the adjacent Vrina Plain to a higher point towards the eastern sector of the lower town (occupied from late antiquity onwards by the Great Basilica). Let us look further at these two access points.

Beginning with the western access, the isthmus led up to a point just below the acropolis where in the later Hellenistic period the West Gate was constructed (Figure 3.6). Travellers would have reached this isthmus by one of three routes: first, either by way of the Vivari Channel and disembarking perhaps at a dock 50 m or so west of Butrint; second, by following the west side of Lake Butrint until it reached the isthmus; third, by boat across Lake Butrint, disembarking on the north side of the narrow isthmus. The 1959 road from Saranda (built for Khrushchev's visit) has altogether altered this earlier

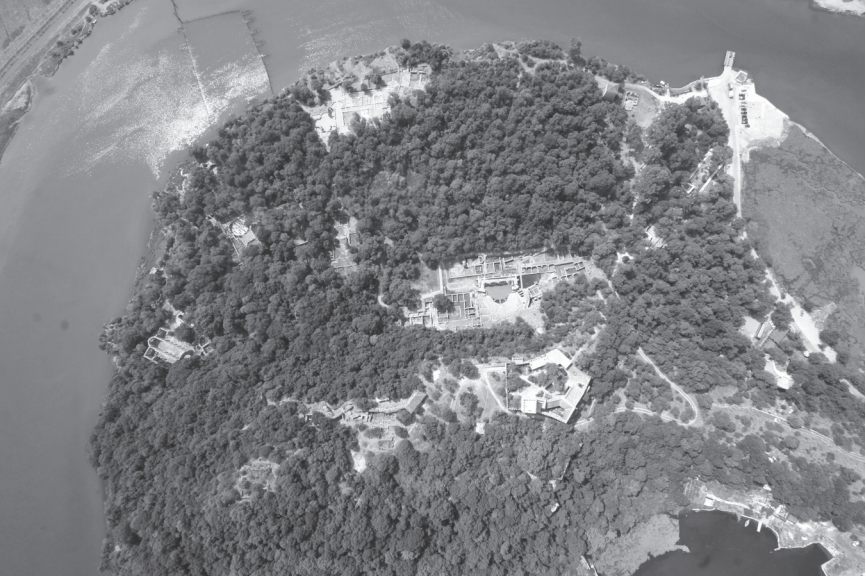


Figure 3.6 View of the acropolis and lower city from directly above.

topography, having been cut into the steep and generally inaccessible south-facing flank of Mount Sotira in order to descend to Butrint. No pre-existing path of any import, we surmise, followed this route but the presence of the Dema wall, probably belonging to the early Hellenistic period, closed off the Ksamili peninsula at the north end of Lake Butrint, and suggests that the land route connecting the major ancient town of Phoinike to Butrint in this period was at least symbolically important.

On arriving by way of the isthmus at the western shoulder of the acropolis, two points need to be emphasized. First, this access point existed because, we may assume, the ground immediately to the west (ie in front of the later Roman to Venetian Western Defences, where the modern gate to the archaeological park is located) was subject to seasonal waterlogging (see Hodges, Bowden, Gilkes and Lako 2004: fig. 1.10). Second, having reached this point on the western shoulder of the acropolis, there were three further feeder routes:

1. up onto the acropolis itself
2. from the acropolis to the north citadel (i.e. the northern slopes of the hill)

3. either from the acropolis to the lower (south-facing) town or, and at certain periods this remains enigmatic, from the point on the western shoulder around the south side of the hill to what, in Hellenistic times became the sanctuary area.

The first two feeder routes are fairly straightforward; the third begs further consideration (see later).

The south-eastern access point provided a connection between the inland north-south valleys and Butrint. Today, this route descends from the upper northern side of Pavllas valley to the village of Xarra before traversing the reclaimed plain to the village of Vrina, and then passing directly to the chain ferry. In other words, the road serves the interests of the communist-period communities close to the Greek border. Before this, the Pavllas river cut across the plain, arriving at an islet in the Vivari Channel opposite Butrint (cf. Martin 2004: fig. 6.24). Travellers instead appear to have descended to Xarra and then followed either the top or sides of the ridged hill known as Shën Dimitri, before moving down to the marshes below, either taking a 'ferry' close to Xarra for Butrint (Hammond 1967: 95) or crossing to a point almost directly opposite Butrint where a deep inlet led off the Vivari Channel (as Neritan Ceka did as a student in 1961: Hodges 2014b) (Figure 3.7). At the latter point, unidentified by Ugolini and his Albanian successors, and adjacent to the line of the Roman imperial aqueduct, a road bridge connected the Vrina Plain – possibly first reclaimed in the later Hellenistic period – to a point directly in front of the monumental Tower Gate (see Fig. 3.11) (Leppard 2013).

The Tower Gate, erected early in the second century, is the key here. This elegantly made entrance sits immediately west of the raised easternmost sector of the lower town (where after AD 500 the Great Basilica was constructed). Three points can be observed about this monumental gate. First, why was the finest Hellenistic gate made some 200 m east of the burgeoning Hellenistic sanctuary and not immediately adjacent to the sanctuary itself? Almost certainly it represented an entry-point that, like the West Gate (on the west shoulder of the acropolis), had an established antiquity. Second, however, the imposing character of the Tower Gate in contrast to the West Gate tends to suggest that the former served as the main entry-point to Butrint at this time, and possibly had been previously. Third, situated at the point where the



Figure 3.7 View of Butrint showing the Great Basilica, Water Gate and Triconch Palace along the Vivari Channel.

low-lying ground in the lower town meets the rising ground behind, it suggests that the skirt of land between the Tower Gate and the Vivari Channel was not settled. The location of the Tower Gate almost certainly prefigured the construction of the road bridge in early Roman times, and in turn the late antique Water Gate and, beside it, the Great Basilica, which remained as Butrint's major – bishop's – church into the later Middle Ages.

Now let us examine the topographic history in a little more detail.

The earliest sedentary occupation at Butrint appears to have been in the Middle to Late Bronze Age, broadly contemporary with the mythic Trojan wars, and concentrated in the shallow fold midway along the south side of the acropolis (Lima 2013). Further occupation was not found at the highest, eastern end, and any evidence at the western end of the hilltop was obliterated by Ugolini's construction of a faux castle here in the 1930s. We may conclude, therefore, that this small nucleus was not seeking the most defensible location on the acropolis, or indeed a view overlooking Lake Butrint, but instead was situated at a point where a path traversing the south-facing slope of the acropolis emerged on the saddle on the summit. Of course, if a small nucleus existed at the west end, overlooking the point occupied by the later West Gate,

this site in the fold in the centre may have been no more than a subsidiary encampment. The Butrint Foundation excavated a similar site to the south on Cape Stylo (Lima 2013). In essence, it was an encampment where locally made ceramics were used. At Butrint, like Cape Stylo, no evidence exists of a palace like Mycenae or Pylos, or significantly, of any palace culture. Aeneas, if he had ever ventured here, *pace* Ugolini, would have found this undistinguished hilltop village underwhelming. Indeed, he might have regarded it as a non-place.

Nevertheless, perhaps there was some memory that endured beyond the closing of the first millennium, as intriguingly, an Archaic Greek period sanctuary was also made on this hilltop (Figure 3.8). Its component parts have to be pieced together. First, the south-facing side of the acropolis has been elevated by a substantial polygonal terrace wall, dated by numerous imported Corinthian black-figure wares, mostly cups found in the shallow dip behind the wall in the saddle of the hill. Second, large numbers of similar black-figure



Figure 3.8 Map of Archaic Greek Butrint.

wares were found deeply stratified below the Roman forum at the foot of the hill, immediately below (Hernandez and Çondi 2014). Third, Butrint possesses a tympaneum depicting a lion attacking a bull from this period reused in a later Roman postern gate (the Lion Gate). It must surely derive from a major archaic temple on the hilltop (Hernandez 2017).

These elements suggest that a sanctuary with a prominent temple crowned the acropolis at this time. Its form and detail are a matter of speculation. No traces of this period were discovered on the high eastern summit, while as before, any evidence at the prominent western end of the hill was obliterated by the construction of the castle (such a western nucleus would have been even more conspicuous from Corfu). Limited though the archaeology is it points to the presence here of a seamount, and perhaps the real germ of Butrint's long history as a place. From this elevated hilltop, the sanctuary faced south to Corfu town in the far distance besides overlooking the lower town and the marshes beyond. Were there other Archaic Greek buildings at Butrint, down in the lower town beside the later sacred springs for example, or was the modest sanctuary on the acropolis an isolated entity? These springs, after all, lent Butrint its *genius loci* in Hellenistic times, and conceivably remained talismanic to this place up until Venetian times, judging by the excavations beside the well dedicated in Roman times by Junia Rufina (Hodges 2013). Sanctuaries and curated springs seldom occur in isolation, but there is as yet no archaeological evidence to suppose that Butrint at this time was an urban settlement of any kind.

This challenges Ugolini's view (1942: 44), later reaffirmed by Neritan Ceka (1988) among others, that the acropolis was entirely enclosed by fortifications at this time (Martin 2004: fig. 6.2). With the new research, N.G.L. Hammond's conclusion (1967: 109) that the extant, south-facing archaic wall was simply a terrace has become increasingly compelling, given the absence of stratified archaic-period material from the Butrint Foundation excavations. The two points of view merit testing by well-planned excavations.

The Archaic Greek sanctuary presumably was the impetus for a larger early fourth century BC sanctuary located directly below the archaic one. The sanctuary dedicated to Asclepius appears to have complemented the earlier one. Situated at the bottom of the south-facing acropolis slope in the space between two springs, it comprised a temple, its treasury, perhaps an earlier

version of the second-century BC Theatre (note Hernandez and Çondi 2008: 276–7) and associated accommodation. The acropolis temple would have retained its significance, we may surmise, due to its status, age and location. Perhaps, as Asclepius and Zeus are depicted ‘equally’ on Butrint’s earliest coinage minted in the late Republic, the temple to Zeus Soter, as yet to be identified, might be the older sanctuary on the acropolis. Butrint was by this time a sacred place, and almost certainly a familiar seamark for those navigating through the Straits of Corfu.

How was the sanctuary to Asclepius approached? This is mere conjecture because all traces have been removed by later construction, but it appears that any pilgrim had three choices: first, arriving from the east, following the lowest contours of the south-facing acropolis slope; second, arriving along the Vivari Channel, the Asclepieion Gate providing a surprisingly simple access to the sanctuary; and third, arriving by way of the isthmus and either venturing around the western end of the hill to reach the treasury, or otherwise traversing the acropolis, and descending down the slope to reach the south end of the nucleus.

The first walled sanctuary may offer further clues (Figure 3.9). Almost certainly dating to the earlier second century BC, these Hellenistic walls enclose a large area, including most of the so-called northern citadel that was well above the water table. These powerful walls extended from the new West Gate on the western shoulder of the acropolis and then arced tightly down to a point immediately beyond (ie west of) the Asclepian sanctuary, passing along the low-lying ground to the Tower Gate.

Several important features have now become apparent as a result of the Butrint Foundation strategy. First, the Tower Gate is the most monumental of the gates, and conceivably the ingress used by members of the later *koinon* who lived in the valley extending eastwards to Çuka e Aitoit (cf. Cabanes, Drini and Hatzopoulos 2007). Second, several substantial gates offer ingress to the northern citadel on the acropolis where we may suppose a residential zone was created. Third, the acropolis was not fortified or made into a separate sector of any kind. Fourth, the sanctuary existed as a kind of appendix to this walled area, tightly packed up against the south-facing slope of the acropolis, and unable to extend out onto the skirt of land beyond because at this date it was too marshy. Most probably, at this time an agora of some kind was inserted

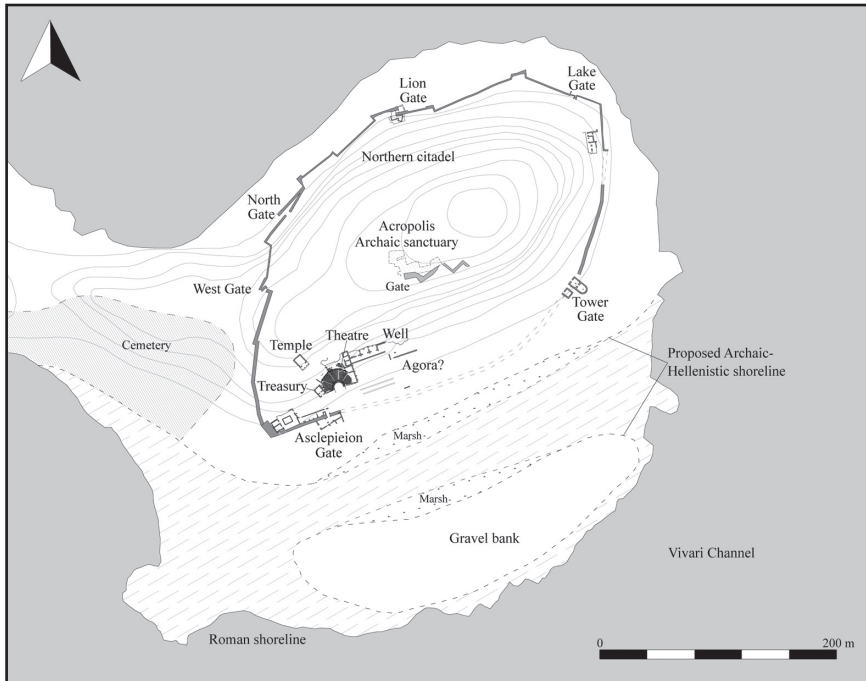


Figure 3.9 Map of Butrint in the Hellenistic period.

immediately east of the sanctuary, accessed from the Tower Gate by way of the rising land immediately behind the new south-facing city wall. Last, the only graves from this period occur alongside the road traversing the isthmus beyond the West Gate. Possibly the ground on the route southwards, beyond the south side of the Vivari Channel, was too marshy and thus unsuitable for a cemetery.

This was no Greek colony, *pace* the Unesco inscription of 1992, but rather a small sanctuary that had expanded into a small town with a theatre covering about 8 hectares. It was also an administrative centre of a *koinon* encompassing the adjacent valley bisected by the river Pavllas as far as modern Konispoli, a point powerfully made by the imposing Tower Gate, the access to this area. Judging by the size of its elegant theatre, as many as 2,000 people belonged to this community. This was not a big place, by contemporary standards; in size and wealth, it was dwarfed by the neighbouring town of Phoinike at this time, which already had expansive Adriatic Sea connections. Butrint was nevertheless

establishing its sacred and political credentials (Giorgi and Bogdani 2012). Like Phoinike it benefited from substantial growth in Republican Roman seaborne trade to the region (cf. Cabanes, Drini and Hatzopoulos 2007; De Maria 2007; Giorgi and Bogdani 2012), arising from the Romanization of Epirus. As a sanctuary, too, it almost certainly prospered at the expense of the hitherto most important sacred site in the region, Dodona near Ioannina.

The early Roman colony explicitly developed the topographic elements of the Hellenistic town (Figure 3.10). The origins of the colony have been discussed elsewhere (see Hansen and Hodges 2007; Hansen 2007, 2009). Suffice it to note that the new investment here immediately after the Battle of Actium in 31 BC effectively changed its standing with regard to Phoinike, making it now an economic rival and, equally, must have caused grave disquiet in Corfu, hitherto the pre-eminent urban centre in the region.

No new fortifications distinguished the colony. Instead, it was furnished with significant new civic investment, including a paved forum and associated surrounding temples and administrative buildings that caused part of the Hellenistic fortifications to be demolished (Hernandez and Çondi 2014). The forum complex lent Butrint the grandiosity of the Pax Romanorum, an investment in public works that connected it through its carefully selected statuary to Rome itself. The Emperor Augustus, his wife Livia and his loyal ally, Agrippa, were among the figures profiled as statues in the new civic centre. Their marble portraits were discovered by Ugolini. Metaphorically, this was the monumentalizing of Virgil's stanzas. Butrint had become an established place, a colony with a timeless origin myth. In addition, there were new infrastructure works, an aqueduct bringing fresh water from a spring at Xarra to the new civic centre and, as we have seen, a bridge directly connecting the Vrina Plain to the pre-existing Tower Gate (Figure 3.11). It is tempting to assume that this was a 38-arched bridge resembling the one at Mérida, Spain that would have blocked any large-scale mercantile traffic from Butrint across Lake Butrint to Phoinike and at a stroke provided economic empowerment to the citizens of Butrint.

In the mid-first century AD there was an expansion of the residential areas across the skirt of land separating the civic centre with its Asclepian sanctuary from the Vivari Channel, and then the making of a bridgehead suburb on the south side of the channel (Figure 3.12). From here, probably at this time, the previously unmanaged and in part marshy landscape was systematically

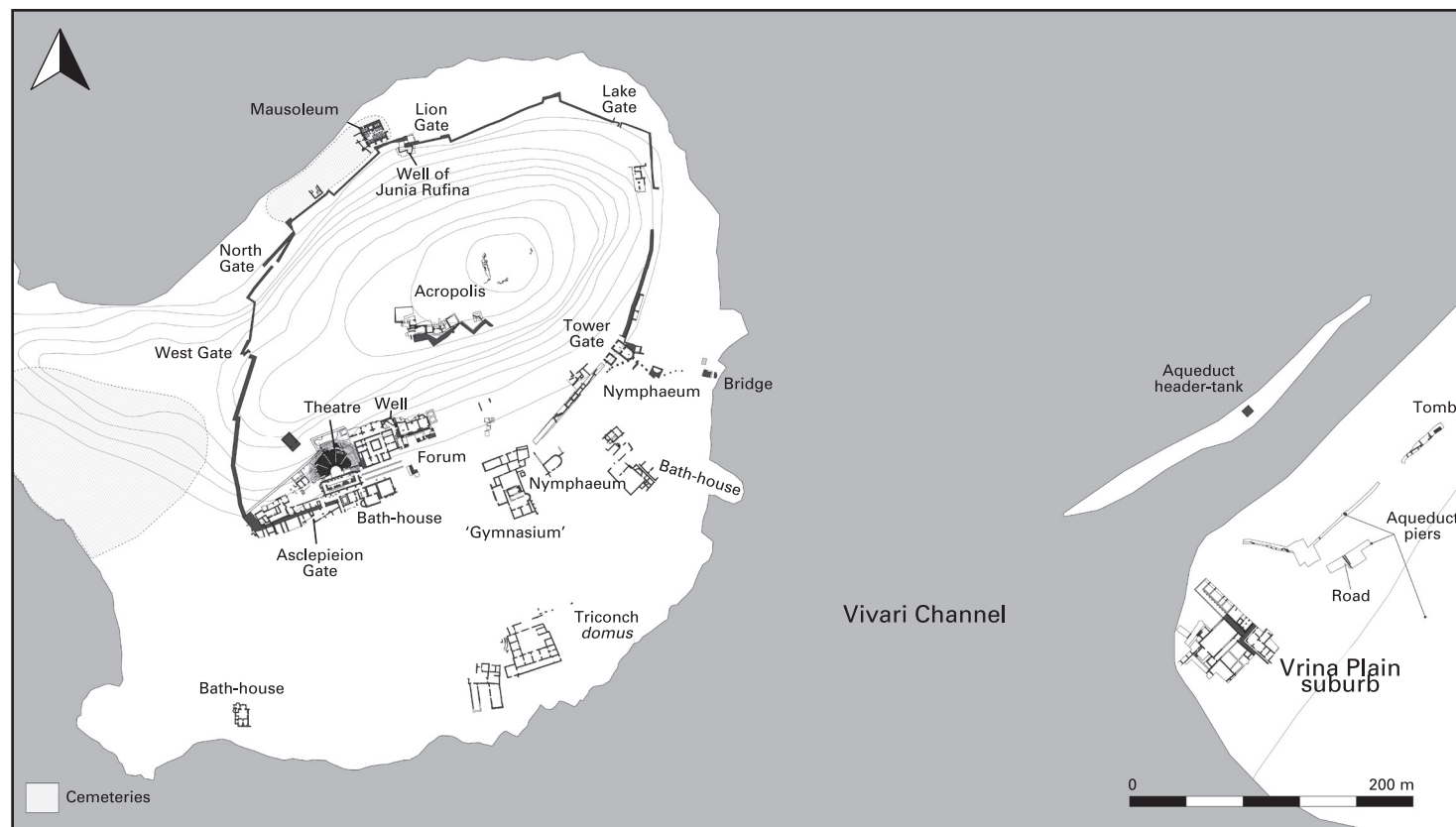


Figure 3.10 Map of Butrint in the early and middle Roman periods.



Figure 3.11 A view of the Roman road bridge.



Figure 3.12 View of the Vrina Plain excavations of the Roman suburb.

colonized, centuriated. The central axis of the first phase of centuriation appears to have followed the Butrint–Çuka e Aitoit road that led to the Butrint bridge. This urban and agrarian investment closely resembles the broadly contemporary circumstances at another important Roman colony in Greece, Corinth (Romano 2003).

These elements were consolidated in the later first and second centuries, with an increasing emphasis upon the construction of major houses, and with access to the sea and lake occupying the plots on the north side of the Vivari Channel, as well as in the suburb at the bridgehead. By now, waterborne maritime traffic, we may speculate, as well as fishing, provided the principle economic drivers for the town.

The cemeteries to some extent indicate the increasing reach and demographic scale of Butrint as a town. Several small mausolea lay alongside the rocky, north side of the Vivari Channel; a mausoleum lay beside the road leading around the west side of Lake Butrint; lesser burials were interred on the isthmus; others were interred in several mausolea (columbaria?) immediately outside the Lion Gate; and finally, small but well fashioned mausolea lay alongside the road running past the bridgehead suburb, in advance of a string of gravefields on the Shën Dimitri ridge (Hernandez and Mitchell 2013).

This topographic matrix – established in the late first century BC and amended in the first century AD – appears to have remained largely unaltered until the later fifth century (Figure 3.13). The properties on either side of the Vivari Channel appear to have bucked the trend of the third-century crisis and prospered, with the villa at the bridgehead covering several hectares by the fourth century (Greenslade 2013). By this time, Butrint had experienced at least one major earthquake in the fourth century that, together with more widespread tectonic changes, irrevocably reversed the situation beside the Vivari Channel (Bescoby 2013). These premium channel-side residences now began to suffer seasonal waterlogging, leading to the cessation of building activity at the Triconch Palace, the largest of these dwellings, during the early to mid-fifth century (Bowden and Hodges 2011). Even before the construction of a new set of town walls, most probably in the early sixth century, the Roman topography of Butrint was in flux.

The late antique walls respected the two principal access points from the isthmus in the west and the road bridge on the east side. Whether the bridge

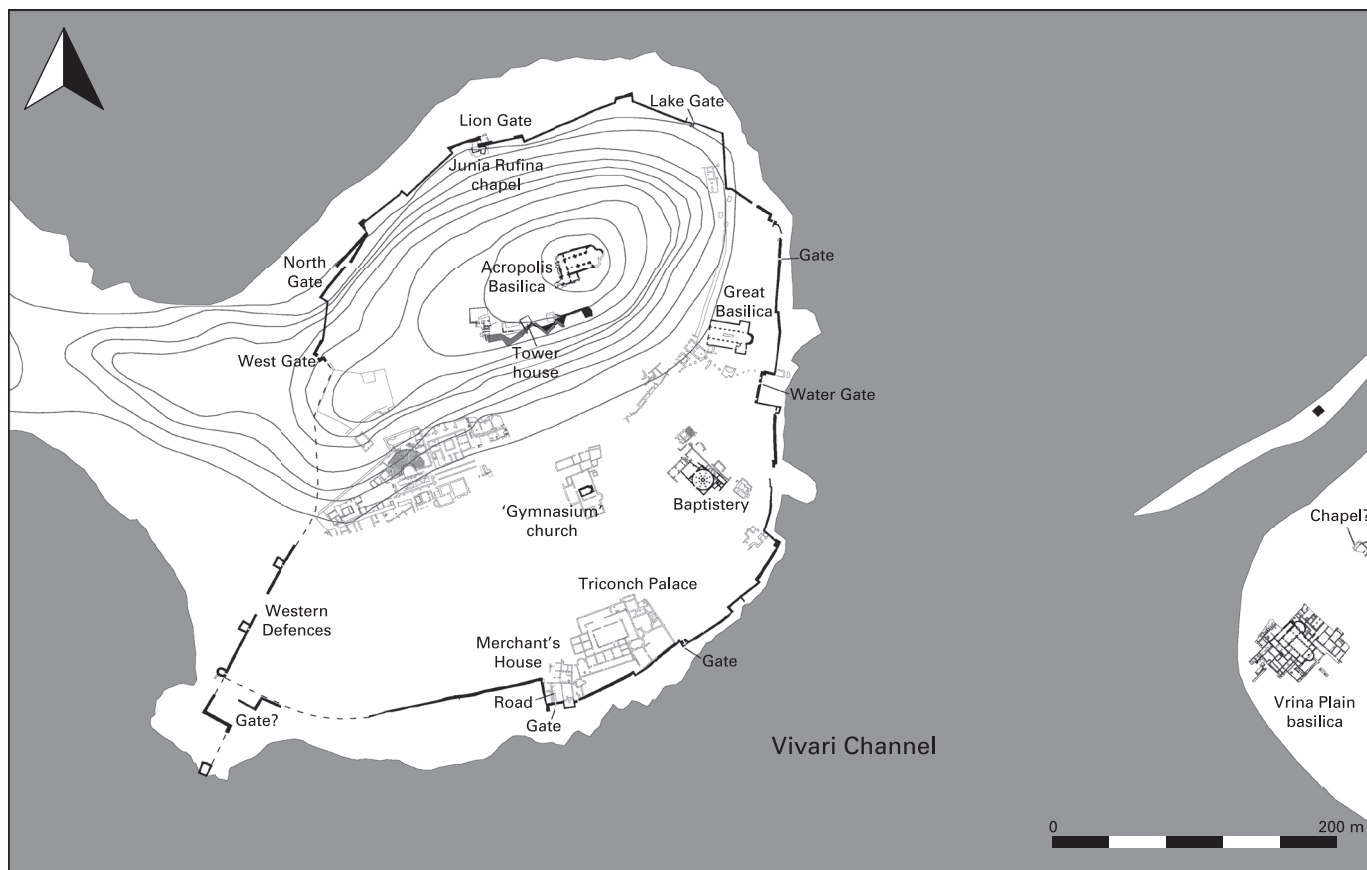


Figure 3.13 Map showing the principal Later Roman (sixth-century) monuments and sites at Butrint.

was actually still standing is not altogether certain. But the adjacent Water Gate with its recessed area for mooring boats affirms the continuing importance of this eastern entrance into the town. The walls followed the Hellenistic circuit around the north side of Butrint, but on the south side followed the Vivari Channel. In other words, the Roman residential building on the channel side, notwithstanding the waterlogging here, persuaded the builders of the town wall of the need to enclose the entire area up to the water's edge. These new early sixth-century walls demarcated the Butrint and were to be an index of the town's extent for Ugolini, the subsequent Albanian archaeologists, and, in 1992, Unesco's inscription consultants.

Many features of this new layout merit observation. First, arriving at the West Gate, the traveller might have soon discovered a new sacred area on the very eastern summit of the hill, a basilica with a triconch and a nearby south-facing tower-house. Second, descending into the lower town, the most formidable towers punctuated the western, seaward-facing, defences. But much of the old civic centre was now re-occupied by substantial buildings of an unknown nature. Third, a gravel road provided access from the gate by the Merchant's House, leading towards the old civic centre; that said, by the sixth century, although undoubtedly used by fishermen and smiths, the area once occupied by the former Merchant's House and Triconch Palace was now used peripherally. Fourth, perhaps the most important sector in the town lay immediately east of the Tower Gate. Here, on raised ground, earlier Roman buildings overlying a great cistern were levelled to make way for a Great Basilica, which like the new triconch church on the summit of the acropolis, commanded the countryside to the east, including the lagoon, rather than the seaway leading to the Straits of Corfu. The bishop, we surmise, lived here, determining the sacred character of the town. Lastly, as if to emphasize this eastward countenance, a large basilica with associated buildings was made within the large suburban townhouse occupying the south bridgehead on the Vrina Plain. The imposing presence of the Church as a sacred force in the new urban layout, notwithstanding Butrint's prominent trading status, was evident everywhere. The architectural rhetoric of its buildings, especially the Baptistery with its complex iconography of its pavement depicting images of fish and fowl, was designed to dominate the fishing-grounds and routes inland, just as the Asclepian temple had dominated the later Hellenistic town.

No longer Virgilian in the strict sense, it was still clearly a vaunted point in Epirus.

By the later sixth century much of Butrint, including the Vrina Plain basilica, was abandoned. There is no evidence of any cataclysm or indeed of the arrival of, for example, the Slavs. Steadily, in common with most ports in the central Mediterranean, the community shrank and largely disappeared. Ceramics and coins belonging to the early seventh century occur in small numbers; those from the later seventh century are absent. Sporadic occupation, probably making use of earlier structures, almost certainly continued on the acropolis and in the lower town. As Lawrence Durrell colourfully described it, 'an ice age settled on the Roman Empire' (Durrell 1945: 75). The town of Butrint appears to have had a tiny population, conceivably of Bronze Age proportions, probably polyfocal, living in small clusters of dwellings. Augustus's civic legacy had all but disappeared except for the memory of it (cf. Hodges 2015a).

The principal stronghold at Butrint in the later seventh and eighth centuries appears to have been located in at least two multi-floored towers in the lower town's west-facing, seaward defences. Here, we may imagine, control – perhaps more symbolic than actual – could be exercised over traffic passing down the Straits of Corfu. Both towers, as it happens, were burnt down, sealing a rare and rich assemblage of artefacts from c. AD 800 (Kamani 2013). Two such cataclysms cannot have been coincidental and strongly suggest that the towers were destroyed deliberately, presumably in a single attack.

Who attacked whom? The artefacts show that the towers contained the portable property of a rich household with extensive connections to all quarters of the Byzantine Empire. Butrint, we may cautiously deduce, was administered by a commander sympathetic to Byzantium. Yet, the region, now known as Vagenetia, was in the hands of a Slavic community, the Baiounetai. Was there some brief uprising as occurred, according to the *Monemvasia Chronicles*, further south in AD 805 at Patras (Curta 2004)? Judging from the archaeological evidence, Byzantine interests plainly suffered, but to judge from the excavated remains on the Vrina Plain, these interests were soon restored.

Excavations in the Roman suburb brought to light the successor to the two tower-houses. Here, in the burnt ruins of the sixth-century basilica (being adjacent to the old road running eastwards, now apparently a sunken trackway, as well as to the embarkation point for Butrint, was the church also destroyed

in the attack of c. AD 800?), the manor-house or aristocratic *oikos* of the probable commander of Butrint was discovered. An arrangement of post-holes fire-blasted through the paved narthex of the fifth-century basilica show that its upper floor was crudely reinforced to take a new residence. A pottery kiln was found close to this building, as were traces of post-built structures. The old nave had been used as a cemetery. Associated with these buildings was a thick deposit of black earth in which forty-eight bronze coins, Byzantine *folles* spanning c. AD 840–950, were found as well as five Byzantine lead seals belonging to the same period. The ceramics, like the prolific coins, appear to distinguish the daily culture of this household from that found in the towers. The exceptional numbers of coins and seals suggest that this was home to a family with administrative connections to Byzantium. Moreover, traded goods were now much in evidence, indicating southern Adriatic Sea connections. Globular amphorae of a distinctive south Italian Otranto type make up about 50% of the pottery, while local kitchen wares almost certainly made here amount to most of the rest (Greenslade and Hodges 2013).

The first-floor dwelling with the associated high-status burials, occupying the entrance to the church, judging from the coins and seals, dates to approximately the mid-ninth to tenth centuries. The coins and seals, discarded in profligate numbers, distinguish the household from anything yet found inside the old late antique fortifications of Butrint. In effect, for more than a hundred years in the ninth and tenth centuries Butrint as a place had become, in administrative terms, a household located in what had once been a suburb.

Occasional bronze coins and potsherds show that intra-mural Butrint was of course, never entirely abandoned. Almost certainly, fishermen and farmers were living in old Roman buildings, much as their officials occupied first the towers in the Western Defences and then the remains of the later Roman Vrina Plain basilica. But this was not a town so much as the memory of a town. This seems to have changed over the span of fifty years during the last quarter of the tenth century and early eleventh century when the first medieval town was established.

The first medieval town was made with many references to the earlier topography. The Triconch Palace excavations provided an important snapshot of the transition towards a new urbanism, spanning two or three generations either side of the millennium. A phase marked first by large numbers of

imported Otranto globular amphorae as well as a small, family cemetery then preceded a distinctly different phase during which tips of rubbish and soil were deployed to raise the ground level (Bowden and Hodges 2011). The late antique wall circuit was rebuilt during this time as well (Figure 3.14). The new defences were constructed mostly using hewn Hellenistic blocks (presumably prised from the Hellenistic fortifications). Similar wall circuits were erected at other Adriatic Sea towns with earlier Hellenistic roots at this time, notably Rogoi in northern Greece (Figure 3.15), at Himara and Sopot, coastal centres further north of Butrint. In all cases earlier blocks were treated as *spolia* and deployed distinctively. A study of these walls, though, points to gangs of workmen repairing and raising sections of the circuit as opposed to one team working to one construction standard. The new wall contained a significant new element: for the first time the acropolis was fortified, suggesting that this was now the *kastron*, the Byzantine administrative centre of the town, replacing the *oikos* on the Vrina Plain. The West Gate, though, remained the principal access point from the west, although the Roman bridge no longer existed. Close by the Water Gate proffering access to the Vrina Plain and beyond was almost certainly restored.

Possibly the most important relic from this era was found in the Forum excavations. Here was discovered the evidence of a new terrace that in turn overlay late antique levels directly on top of the Roman forum pavement. Running east–west over this new terrace was a makeshift orthostat wall in which a *foliis* of Basil II/Constantine VIII (1020–28) was found. As in the new defences, the orthostats appear to be reused Hellenistic blocks that have been roughly hewn or split to make powerful walls. Sections of this particular orthostat wall were found by Ugolini to run across the area of the orchestra in the Theatre; other sections were found to the east, running along the lower contours of the hill slope towards the north-west corner of the Great Basilica. Putting the three sections of this undistinguished intervention together, it appears to be a boundary wall running from the Great Basilica to the Western Defences.

Two tracts of similar walling were discovered either side of the Great Basilica. One short tract associated with a *foliis* of John I Syzmites (969–76) appears to run from the Hellenistic fortifications eastwards to form a north boundary to an enclosure around the Great Basilica. A second tract forming an

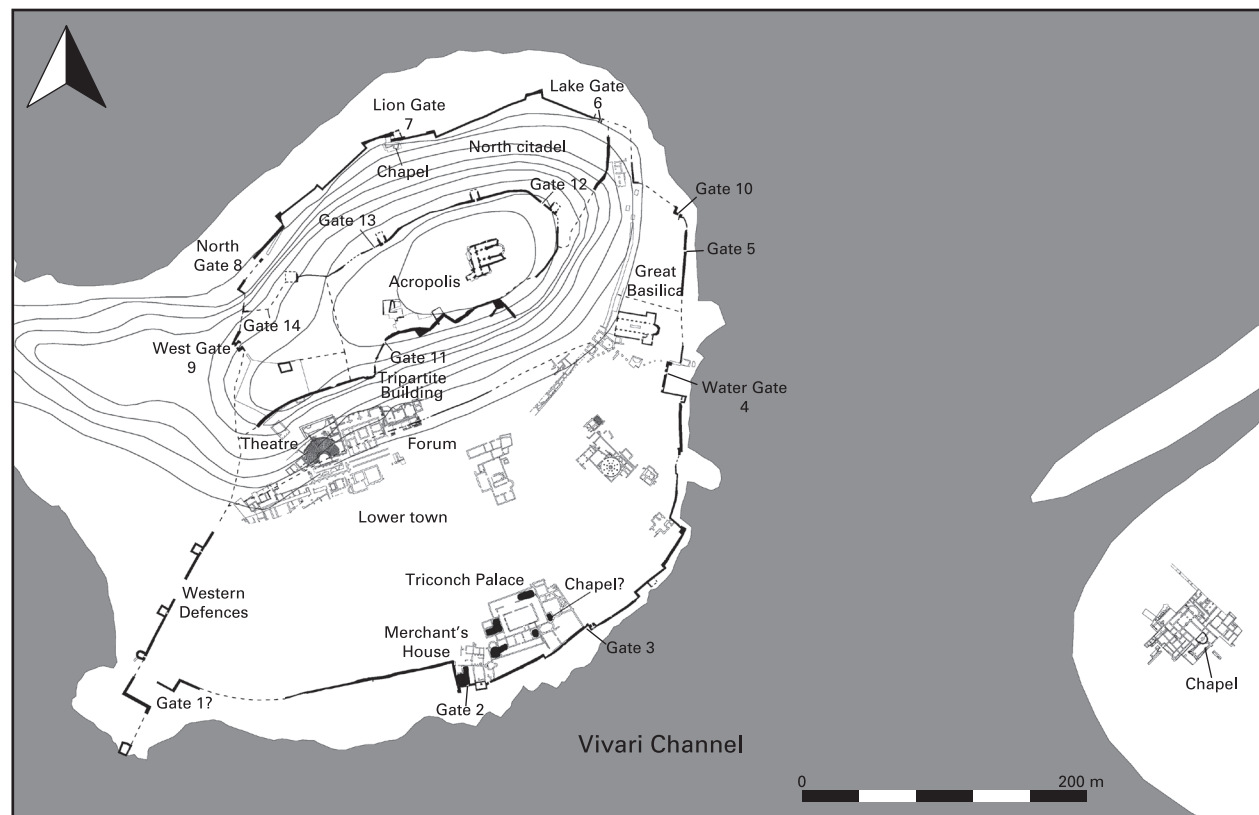


Figure 3.14 Map showing the principal eleventh-century fortifications and urban features at Butrint.

lots in Byzantine Thebes), divided up the new town into the property parcels of Butrint's new elite. The enclosure around the Great Basilica was perhaps erected by the bishop; the long axial walls traversing the old sanctuary were probably defining the strip-like properties running from the Western Defences parallel to the Vivari Channel.

Belonging to this period are several small chapels, judging from the Triconch Palace excavations, each associated with a family (Bowden and Hodges 2011). Quite probably, it was a family that re-appropriated the sacred spring, previously a well dedicated by a second-century matron, Junia Rufina, as well as the little church beside it. The churches of this period – from the Triconch Palace, the Junia Rufina well and the Vrina Plain – were miniatures by comparison with the local late antique basilicas. Effectively these were shrines belonging, we might surmise, to the merchants and landowners who made the new medieval town.

Finally, renewed activity all over Butrint (except on the Vrina Plain) is attested by a consistent sprinkling of later tenth- to eleventh-century coins and associated Otranto 2 amphorae sherds. The architects of high medieval Butrint appear to have ignored the ground water in those parts alongside the Vivari Channel, and made a new town that now had four sectors: (i) the acropolis; (ii) the northern citadel; (iii) the raised and enclosed area occupied by the Great Basilica; (iv) the lower town.

The topography of the eleventh-century town undoubtedly shaped a new iteration of Butrint. Over the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Epirote Despots, then the Angevins, and finally the Venetians strengthened the town's defences, but did little to alter the pre-existing topographical elements. The turbulence of the era has left little impact on the place, where the Roman remains lay largely buried and small-scale properties selected the slopes to avoid the rising water table. As a result, the two principal access points remained the same: the West Gate was ultimately massively strengthened with a barbican during the fourteenth century, and the width of the Water Gate was narrowed, thereby restricting entry from the recessed mooring area beside the Vivari Channel. The eventual desertion of the Vrina Plain church by the thirteenth century was probably a response to increased waterlogging that made access from the east of Butrint increasingly harder. However, the old road to Xarra and Çuka e Aitoit, as well as the embarkation point to the town,

it appears, never entirely disappeared. Nevertheless, Butrint's commander – the castellan – placed exaggerated emphasis upon a show of defensive force to those approaching from the west. This emphasis was extended to include a new seaward wall, replacing the old Western Defences, on the western side of the lower town, and a high closure wall running down the western side of the northern citadel (Andrews *et al.* 2004: fig. 8.17 f; fig. 8.25 c respectively).

The archaeology, however, reveals more about the changes to Butrint's layout. With increased waterlogging now being much more evident, tracts of the lower town, especially along the Vivari Channel, were largely abandoned to fishermen or indeed allotments. Two small churches, in the so-called Gymnasium and north of the Baptistery, demark the southernmost extent of any settlement here, much of it necessarily occupying the south-facing acropolis slope. These circumstances explain the closure of the small gates along the Vivari Channel. The remaining gates, however, associated with the elevated easternmost sector of the lower town, occupied by the Great Basilica, show that this section of the town – as the written sources confirm – continued to be an important if separate entity. Finally, it is clear that the acropolis castle and its associated bailiwick were strengthened in stages with the single tower, a characteristic of later medieval castles in Epirus, being enclosed within a powerful enceinte by the fourteenth century.

The episodic investment in defending Butrint as a town in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries shows that it still possessed an active urban population. The community, we may surmise, was concentrated on the slopes of the northern citadel, and perhaps on the steep south-facing lower slopes of the acropolis. Their numbers, though, should not be exaggerated as the Junia Rufina well excavations produced only small amounts of late medieval pottery – a mere 1 per cent – in the overburden that had slipped down the north-facing hillside.

The 600-year-old urban history ended, supposedly in 1572, when the acropolis was abandoned following the battle of Lepanto. In all probability the town had been dwindling in size since the continuous unrest in the region during the later fourteenth century. Moving the bishopric to Glykys in 1337/38 (Soustal 2004: 24), however, removed a powerful urban institution, and with increasing Ottoman pressure to capture the important fishing grounds here, the Venetians reduced their presence dramatically and concentrated their

efforts in new military works. At the end of the fifteenth century when Ugolino Verino wrote his epic poem, *Carlias*, Butrint had no squares or palaces, only a dismaying sense of dereliction (Gwynne, Hodges and Vroom 2014). The castle occupying the western end of the acropolis was by the sixteenth century a formidable presence, but it was far from the fish-traps in the Vivari Channel (Figure 3.16). This caused the erection of a new tower beside the channel close to the western terminus of the Western Defences, and the reinforcing of a tower close to the Merchant's House (Bowden and Hodges 2011). Soon afterwards, the more extensive Triangular Castle was constructed on the islet where the Pavllas river met the Vivari Channel, leading directly to the desertion of the acropolis castle. Butrint as a place from this moment became centred upon the channel as its main axis, and on the protection and exploitation of its fishing. Venetian fishing houses were constructed at the entrance to the Vivari Channel and, behind the makeshift lower town fortifications, close to the Triconch Palace. In the Ottoman era, these Venetian dwellings were deserted in favour of a ribbon of dwellings along the south shore of the channel directly in front of the Triangular Castle. As of 1572 or soon afterwards, Butrint's churches and sacred wells were abandoned, terminating two millennia of spiritual association with this place.

It was the ruins of Venetian properties, the new Ottoman-age houses, the strongholds and the dilapidated defences that greeted Colonel Leake when he arrived by boat at Butrint in 1805. He would have sailed past Ali Pasha's stout, new castle guarding the mouth of the Vivari Channel against incursions (Figure 3.17).

The Butrint Foundation project also involved several different investigations of the relationship of the town through time with its immediate hinterland. These included excavations of the early Imperial Roman Bridge connecting the isthmus (by way of the Vivari Channel) to the Vrina Plain and the inland valley extending to Konispoli (Leppard 2013). As we have already seen, it also included excavations of the suburb on the Vrina Plain, created in the early Imperial Roman period, connected by the bridge to the main town. Here, a section of the road linking the bridgehead beside the Vivari Channel to the inland valley was excavated (Greenslade 2013). Beyond this suburb, the project undertook surveys of the surrounding area. This took four forms. The first involved analysis of the aerial photography dating from the Second World War



Figure 3.15 View of the Hellenistic and eleventh-century urban fortifications at Rogoi, near Arta, northern Greece.

east side, still standing 1 m high, conspicuously runs across the top of the Roman bridge over the Vivari Channel which presumably no longer functioned. Hardly prepossessing, these walls, to judge from the written sources and excavated urban lots in other parts of Europe (cf. Neville 2004: 123–4 describing

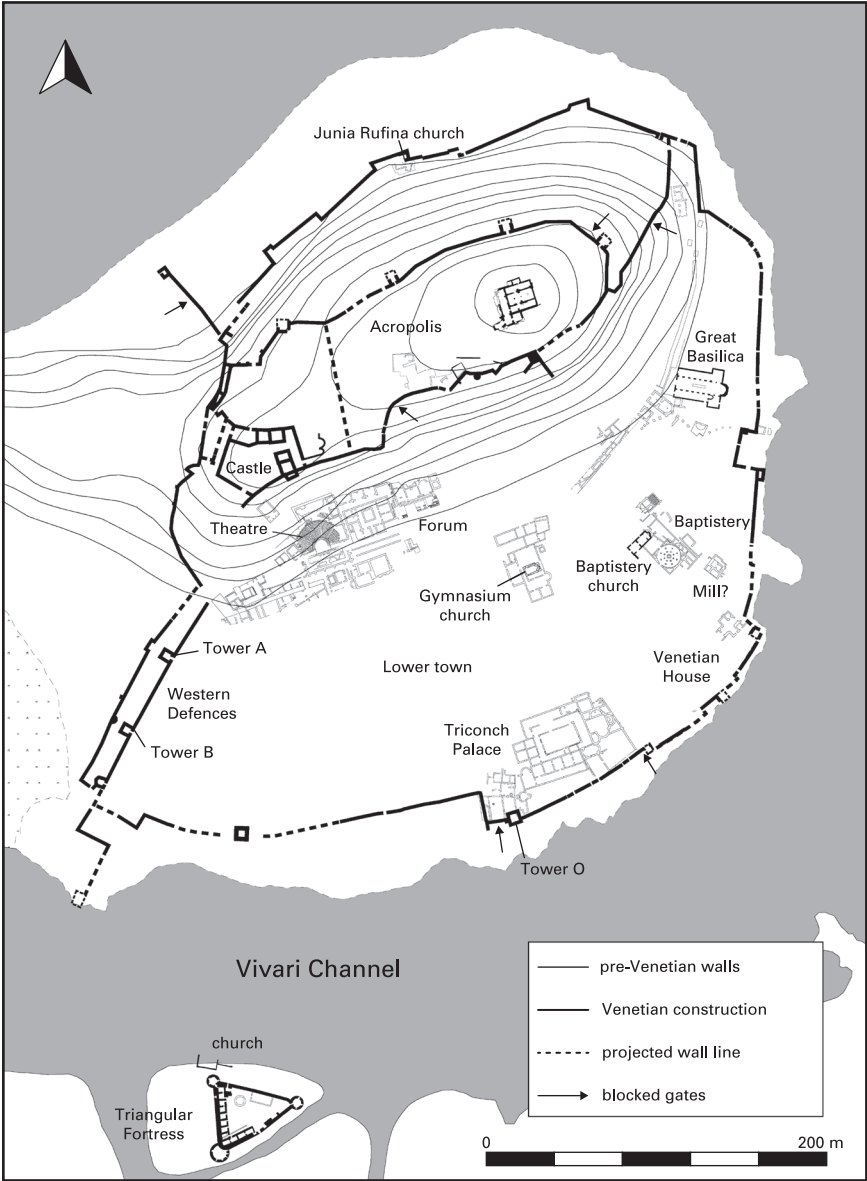


Figure 3.16 Map showing the principal fortifications and features of fifteenth-century (Venetian) Butrint.



Figure 3.17 Aerial view of Ali Pasha's (early nineteenth-century) castle at the mouth of the Vivari Channel.

showing two phases of centuriation dating to the early Imperial Roman period (Bescoby 2007, 2013). The second comprised two field surveys and associated environmental surveys. The environmental surveys revealed the changing ecological (and climatic) circumstances of this lagoon landscape (Lane *et al.* 2004; Bescoby, Barclay and Andrews 2008; Bescoby 2013; Morellón *et al.* 2016). The first field survey undertaken in 1995–96 focused upon the area immediately around Butrint (Pluciennik *et al.* 2004). The second survey, undertaken in November 2008, examined an area further to the east, including the villages of Mursi and Xarra. This latter survey included a corridor of land reaching from the south shore of Lake Butrint at the site of the Roman villa of Diaporit to a beyond 2 km east of the modern village of Mursi.

As a result of this combination of surveys, a picture is now emerging of Butrint's hinterland. The new narrative based on these surveys suggests a network of small-scale Bronze Age hilltops with an emphasis on the mixed exploitation of the lagoon. Settlements on the hilltops were superseded in the mid-first millennium BC, by an entirely different settlement system, with a network of Hellenistic fortified villas dependent upon the growing sanctuary

town of Butrint. With the drop in the water table, the reclaimed marshes around Butrint on the Vrina Plain became increasingly accessible. This environmental change facilitated investment in Butrint in the early Imperial period, as the Augustan colony was involved not only in the making of a civic centre and a road bridge connecting it to the region east of the town, but also the incentives to manage this landscape and exploit it systematically. This was intrusive and consistent with the comprehensive Roman conquest and control of the area, as elsewhere in Roman Greece (Alcock 1993: 171), at Corinth (Romano 2003), Patras and other smaller colonies (Ritzakis 2010). Several large and small farms appear to have been established, mostly lasting into the second century (like those at Diaporit and Malathrea). However, the settlement history at the bridgehead on the Vrina Plain suggests that this colonial process was succeeded by an estate belonging to the sizeable household (of some affluence judging from the Attic sarcophagi fragments from the temple mausoleum) that entirely occupied this old suburb, operating perhaps with a network of smaller associated farmsteads (Greenslade 2013). Importantly, the large middle Roman Vrina Plain villa occupying the earlier bridgehead suburb dates to the moment when the Roman (and earlier Hellenistic) villa at Diaporit was deserted (Bowden and Përzhita 2004a). It remains to be determined whether the other villas found in this survey area were also abandoned at this time (Hodges *et al.* 2016).

Judging from the survey data, the revival of Butrint in the later fifth and sixth centuries was reflected in the short-term reoccupation of certain strategic ecological points in its immediate hinterland. Thanks to the excavations at Diaporit and Malathrea, it is evident that certain earlier villas were briefly renovated (Bowden and Përzhita 2004a; Çondi 1984; Giorgi and Bogdani 2012: 252), but with the sudden decline of the port in the later sixth and seventh centuries, the evidence from the surveys suggests Butrint's hinterland was largely abandoned. The marked density of Late Antique sites discovered in Attic Greece, sometimes surpassing Early Imperial sites is not replicated in Butrint's hinterland (cf. Sanders 2004: 163–8). The survey data indicate that even with the substantial renewal of Butrint as a port in the later tenth and eleventh centuries, when a new castle, new city walls and new urban elements were constructed (Hodges 2016), it was largely disengaged from its surrounding hinterland. Minimal evidence of medieval rural settlements was discovered,

although, of course, post-classical sites were probably small communities on hilltops like Mursi and Xarra – beneath later (i.e. modern) villages – with limited footprints characterized by either post-built or small stone structures like those discovered in the Triconch Palace area of Butrint (Bowden and Hodges 2011: 119–44). It seems that Butrint's new occupants, lacking the bridge to connect it to the Vrina Plain and beyond, chose instead to focus upon a less intensive mix of food procurement dependent upon herding into the hills, and cultivating gardens within the fortified town and its immediate vicinity.

In this Epirote town, then, *pace* Horden and Purcell (2000), a seminal Mediterranean urban story was *detachable* from the history of its landscape. In common with the history of the Epirote coastal regions around Glykys and Nikopolis, intensive Roman settlement following Octavian's victory at the battle of Actium in 31 BC significantly altered the Hellenistic settlement pattern (Alcock 1993: 132–45). This was an aberration over the course of millennia. The Butrint evidence tends to affirm William Harris's (2005: 33) critique of Horden and Purcell's *The Corrupting Sea*:

what is needed now is not paradox or exaggeration but a balanced approach which recognizes the crucial elements that towns represented. There is no end to describing and defining the relationship between town and country, and once again the story varies from period to period, but the central point is too obvious to bear much repetition. Even if for some obscure reason the complex term 'Romanization' were to be rejected by informed historians, the fact would remain that the spread of Roman power really did mean a measure of urbanization, and of a specific kind, with environmental as well as other consequences.

Luigi Maria Ugolini might have found Harris's conclusions hard to accept. He defined Butrint as essentially an urban continuum with its defensive nucleus occupying the acropolis, and the lower town being its main civic component. Understandably, as Ugolini arrived here by boat, he saw the Vivari Channel was the main axis of this continuum from Archaic to Ottoman times. This in turn conjured up a place that was essentially dependent upon seaborne connections. Post-war Albanian archaeologists, without making any new discoveries of import, reversed Ugolini's interpretation of the continuum for nationalist purposes, identifying the town's sequence of defences as indices of resistance to

numerous seaborne invaders. The Butrint Foundation's project shows that the continuum was a chimera. Butrint as a community grew and failed more than once, but the bases of this, invariably determined to some extent by the environmental conditions, oscillated between two very different rhythms. For example, the absence of (seaborne) imported wares in the Bronze Age nucleus on the acropolis shows a connection to inland Epirote political economies rather than those linked to the Adriatic Sea. This, of course, was the same in the Ottoman age, when Butrint looked inland to Epirus, and indeed its fish were transported to the regional capital of Ioannina. The first sanctuary of Asclepius may well have functioned for the immediate Epirote communities occupying the valleys to Konispoli and beyond. So, too, judging from the pronounced importance of the Tower Gate, did the first Hellenistic walled community. Its *koinon*, Cabanes, Drini ad Hatzopoulous (2007) contend on the bases of Butrint's 206 manumission inscriptions, extended eastwards up the valley as far as Çuka e Aitoit. The Augustan Roman colony altered the emphasis of Butrint. It looked both westwards as well as eastwards now, although with its centuriated landscape stretching almost to Çuka e Aitoit, we should not understate the importance of agrarian and fishing products to the livelihood of the town. Indeed, this is a quintessential example of the 'ruralized' Mediterranean town that Horden and Purcell describe (2000: 100–1). It is a place that is a micro-region encompassing residential, man-made and lagoon landscapes rather than an urban place within marked confines. Even in late antiquity, it was to those lands to the east rather than the west that the new churches sought to impose a commanding presence. Only in the Middle Ages did this emphasis change. Now, its perspective was to look westwards to the Mediterranean, exploiting not its lands lost to marshes, but its fishing grounds, to furnish the ships and properties of a sequence of colonizers. Ironically, we know almost nothing of the nature of this late medieval town, largely concentrated in the northern citadel. In retrospect, the Butrint Foundation project, like the Albanian archaeologists who worked here between 1959 and 1992, was seduced by Luigi Maria Ugolini's richly embroidered history of the lower town on the south side, and failed to grasp the importance of this unexplored northern sector of Butrint.

In summary, then, the Butrint Foundation's excavation campaigns – with less than 5 per cent of the city examined in conjunction with limited surveys of its hinterland – indicate an intermittent and complex history much of it

related to its Mediterranean connections. How might we now define this new twenty-first-century identity for Butrint? Shorn of myths, it owes little to nationalist agendas. Possibly it is too complicated and thus confusing, but nevertheless it frames the proposed new master narrative of this place. It is built of our chronologically-based interpretation of the excavated levels and their relationship to monuments and finds as diverse as statues and animal bones. Being a construct of our time and thinking, we were sensitive to the needs of both fully publishing and storing these data, both as hard copy at the Rothschild Foundation and the Albanian Institute of Archaeology, and in a simple digital form with the Integrated Archaeological Database of the York Archaeological Trust. The associated finds from our excavations are labelled and catalogued and, while mostly published in one form or another (some online), can be consulted in the castle at Butrint. Such publications and archives already show their age and agency, but nonetheless they exist! Our interpretation, we may surmise, will be challenged as new paradigms are developed and our perspective of this Mediterranean place gives way to others who see it through a different diachronic lens and seek different narratives.

We might add one other future prospect for these diachronic archaeological maps based upon the excavations. It can be inferred that today, as yesterday, places become part of material culture whenever and however they interacted with them. This was and is true in terms of perception, remembering and forgetting. In this sense, intangible elements of the townscape such as memory, myth and associations qualify places as much as more tangible and visible topographic elements. Depicting these intangible elements is the next challenge for understanding Butrint. Certainly tracing Virgil's shadow in relational forms, for example, is a great prospective challenge for all future excavators of Butrint.

For the moment, though, judging from the Butrint Foundation investigations, we have arrived at less colourful but no less significant conclusions. Most obviously, Butrint belonged to the Mediterranean Sea (as described by Abulafia earlier) as opposed to an Epirote 'platter' (to cite Davis 2000 one final time). It was primarily a maritime place imbued with a palimpsest of memories, which necessarily engaged in an essential dialogue with its immediate hinterland and/or other Adriatic Sea communities like Corfu, Saranda, Himara and Sopot in the vicinity as well as points further north in the Salento of south-east Italy.

The history and scale of these changing rhythms is the relational essence of the place, its monuments, its art and architecture, its diet and its material culture as well as its lifeways. Located in a lagoon, these rhythms, as today, were to some degree shaped by the history of the marshes, often inhospitable and intractable, and their seemingly infinite economic properties. Its topographic history traces the struggle to manage, exploit and defend this intermittently volatile environment. Today these marshes, drained by Czech engineers following a Chinese plan in the 1960s, have provided Butrint as a place with its 'Homeric' setting. As in all aspects of this history, these marshes have ebbed and grown at different times since the early 1990s and will almost certainly continue to do so.

A Short History of the Butrint Foundation

The world is no longer made up of colonizers and colonized alone, nor was it ever so simply split. The provisional category that I have identified as crypto-colonialism offers a critical perspective on the distribution of cultural significance in anthropology and the world: instead of simply accepting the idea that some countries might be unimportant while others might be uninteresting, we ask who defines the nature of importance and interest and so challenge the established world-order politics of significance. This moves anthropology to the critique of new subalternities and new complexities of power.

Herzfeld 2002: 922–3

Hoxha ‘... was the most tragic figure in our history. You cannot stand anywhere in Albania without seeing bunkers. He buried us in bunkers.

(President) Sali Berisha, quoted by Sullivan 1992: 18–19

In 1992, when Albania held its first democratic elections seven years after the death of Enver Hoxha, archaeology and archaeologists were still prized professionals despite the turmoil of change. Indeed such was their status, several Albanian archaeologists soon emerged as senior politicians. Neritan Ceka formed his own party; Aleksandër Meksi became President Berisha's prime minister, and Genc Pollo was initially Berisha's spokesperson, then later a Democratic Party minister. Nevertheless, the ideological motive for state-supported archaeology had evaporated with communism and the future looked bleak for this community. With some urgency, following the experiment with a Greek collaboration at Butrint, the then Director of the Institute of Archaeology in Tirana, Neritan Ceka, looked to diverse foreign institutions to resource them (Figure 4.1). Invitations were faxed and posted to the foreign

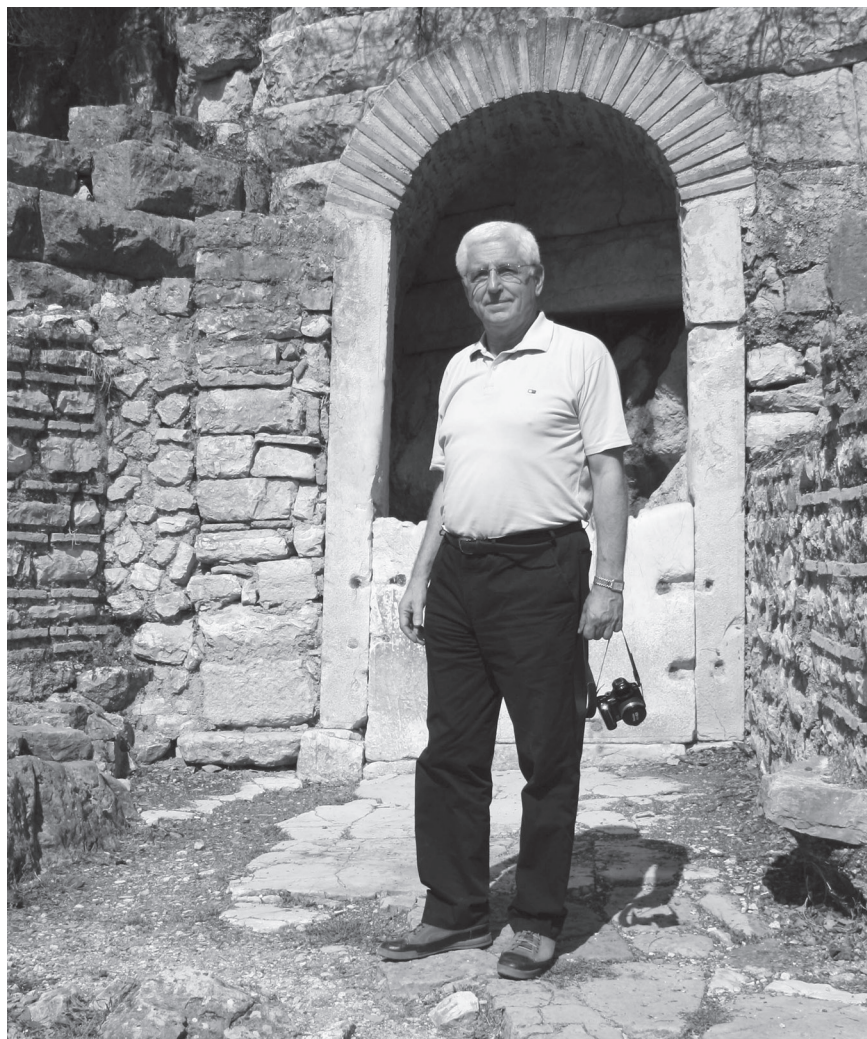


Figure 4.1 Neritan Ceka at Butrint, 2010.

institutes and schools in Athens and Rome, in the hope that French and Italian research teams might come as paying partners in projects and drip-feed resources into the Institute of Archaeology. An invitation also went to a less obvious party to gauge his interest in Butrint – to the banker and philanthropist, Lord Rothschild. This led him to make an impromptu visit to Butrint, out of which with time came the Butrint Foundation.

The Butrint Foundation was registered as a charity (in London) in 1993 with two trustees Lord Jacob Rothschild and Lord John Sainsbury of Preston Candover. Its stated mission was to research, protect and present the World Heritage site of Butrint, ancient *Buthrotum*, inscribed by Unesco in 1992. Rothschild, who owns a villa near Kassiopi on Corfu overlooking Butrint bay, and Sainsbury, who for over twenty years at that time had rented the villa, had been invited by the Director of the Albanian Institute of Archaeology, Neritan Ceka, to create an archaeological project at Butrint. Neither had been involved in archaeology before, but both shared well-established philanthropic interests in supporting the arts in the United Kingdom. Undertaking a project in Albania appeared not only to be an intriguing international sequel to their recent collaboration, the establishing of a major wing for the National Gallery in London, but it also promised assistance to Albania. In the back of their minds, to be sure, was the protection of the coastline and site of Butrint, as well as, no doubt, the excitement of making new archaeological discoveries.

This project, of course, was also born of 1990's neo-liberal capitalism and the excitement created by the collapse of east European communism (cf. Hamilakis 2007). With this exceptional philanthropic support, essentially unlike any other UK archaeological project of its kind, there existed an opportunity to assist Albania, which was almost as baffling in the 1990s to those British archaeologists steeped in state support for projects as it was to the Albanians. From the outset it was an engaging, newsworthy initiative in an otherwise conflicted country. In July 1994 the Butrint Foundation signed a memorandum of understanding with Prime Minister Meksi (who had studied the Baptistery at Butrint (Meksi 1983)). The first active operations were programmed for September 1994. From the first day, there were difficulties.

Phase 1: No meeting of minds, 1994–96

The first period of this project, between 1994 and 1996, can best be described as a confrontation of scientific cultures (cf. see Pettifer and Vickers 1997; Hall 1999 for brief synopses of the political history). The conflict revolved around

resources, as opposed to practices. The amply resourced Butrint Foundation team was goal-oriented to deliver results to the Foundation's trustees. The Foundation's programme was tacitly fuelled by an antipathy to an Albanian nationalism with its use of archaeology as symbolic capital for an authoritative regime (cf. Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996). By contrast, impoverished overnight by the collapse of communism, the Albanian team understandably prioritized obtaining every opportunity to sustain themselves and their families. The Foundation set out to develop a strategy based upon a combination of multi-disciplinary research, involving low-cost reversible conservation (suitable for the local circumstances), presentation and marketing in order to increase tourism and therefore create income and employment at Butrint. The model for this archaeological strategy with its emphasis upon management was, to be fair, unusual in western research archaeology (see Chapters 2 and 3). The specific model was the late Riccardo Francovich's innovative archaeological park at Rocca San Silvestro, a deserted medieval hilltop village in Tuscany, that opened to the public in 1996 (Settis 2011). (It should be added that the Foundation supported many in its team to UK salary standards.)

The Albanian team, raised on academic archaeology and in the midst of collaborating with foreign academies broadly adhering to the same normative approaches, had no interest in the Foundation's objectives. The new Director of the Institute of Archaeology, Namik Bodinaku (Neritan Ceka was now actively creating a new political party), candidly admitted that he and his colleagues wanted to become rich. In retrospect, it is not clear what they really wanted. Perhaps they wanted to sustain their elite life styles; perhaps they only wished to maintain some quality of life for themselves and their families. Either way, pursuing the project was destined to be complicated.

The shadow of Enver Hoxha was ubiquitous, making all efforts to introduce Western concepts (except unbridled capitalism) extremely difficult (cf. Hall 1999). In this first post-communist decade the prevalent atmosphere of near-anarchy – punctuated by constant interventions from the IMF, the World Bank and countless other Western agencies – made spending time in Albania, with its backward-looking nationalist ideology, a surreal experience. But more perplexing than the mania of Albania's 600,000 communist-period bunkers, noted by all foreign journalists, were the invisible but pervasive scars of isolation and repression. Coming from Britain with its evolving post-Thatcher

neo-liberal values, it was impossible for the Butrint Foundation team to grasp what Dipesh Chakrabarty (2007) calls ‘historical wounds’ – wherein a broad social consensus owe their marginalization to a discrimination and oppression suffered not in this case as a result of a colonial past but from totalitarianism. These wounds existed somewhere between a lived poverty, a post-war history and memory. The country had collapsed between 1990 and 1993. Civic services such as energy in the form of electricity were at best quixotic. Few roads were surfaced and all roads were unfit for the flocks of stolen cars suddenly available in the country. Most of the fields and orchards had been purposefully destroyed in 1991 to make regime-change a certainty. Lake Butrint’s monstrous concrete mussel beds were left to rot, as were the collective farms and their yards with rusting Chinese-made machinery. The pumping station installed in the 1960s managing the Vrina Plain around Butrint was effective only episodically, leading to permanent inundations by the sea and the salination of tracts of land. Peasants, shepherds and fishermen in the environs of Butrint were reduced to abject poverty, all too evident in their villages with piles of rubbish, and untended livestock. Most of the younger village men had emigrated illegally to find work in Greece, leaving women and children to fend for themselves. A nightmarish political vacuum existed, mitigated by the new fetishism for satellite television that merely accentuated the satanic plight of the people (cf. Pettifer and Vickers 1997). In every respect as unreal as the satellite television was the prospect of developing a major marina on Butrint bay by a Maltese entrepreneur, the charismatic Angelo Xuareb. Encouraged by President Berisha’s embattled government, this gigantic intervention would have transformed Butrint, effectively obliterating its context. Issues of whether the infrastructure could support the development of a massive marina were simply overlooked. Viewed from the pitch dark in Albania, the effervescent lights of Corfu opposite were a reminder of how Lawrence Durrell’s pre-war paradise was destroyed by hotels and marinas – non-places – in the 1970’s and 1980’s hunt for revenue from homogenization.

Our first step had to be to find a way to operate at Butrint in order to use the archaeology as a means to assist the communities and to confront the marina development. This proved to be exasperatingly difficult. Every initiative proposed to our Albanian collaborators was blocked. They controlled the

permit to practise archaeology and believed that they were entitled to handsome stipends for allowing the Butrint Foundation to operate in this, Albania's most privileged domain. Their negotiating rate started with three apartments in Paris and five Mercedes. The Albanian team was eager to talk: to recount their pasts, their trials and, above all, their resistance to changing their operational practices. Encouraged by short fellowships and bursaries to foreign conferences since 1991, they were animated by their desires: to secure a family life, western clothes, a good car, and gain access to libraries with international publications and the simple experience of travel.

Sympathetic yet protected by our cultural firewalls (and European Union passports), we naively attempted to introduce modern European archaeological practice to our Albanian partners. This they resisted in the belief (as a result of isolation) that they were the premier archaeologists in the world (cf. Bowden and Hodges 2004). As I have already mentioned, the practice of archaeology was intended to sustain the nation-state with a timeless foundation myth. Unstated, language was also a barrier. We spoke only rudimentary Albanian and, with few Albanians speaking English, Italian became the medium of discourse. Days of deliberation led nowhere, while our excavation teams 'gardened' or surveyed the environs of Butrint. On the other hand, oblivious to Hoxha's discrete cultural heritage strategy, our Albanian colleagues were doggedly resistant to any kind of conservation strategy and, more significantly, to 'tourism archaeology', as an erstwhile Director of the Institute of Archaeology derisively termed it.¹ Their business – they repeatedly stated – was science not management.

Our Albanian colleagues were not alone in being unrealistic. Our plans for a new museum (to replace the 1988 renewal of Ugolini's 1930s museum that was closed in 1991), drawn up in 1995 were a measure of the other-worldliness of the project. Elegantly designed to contemporary first-world standards with elements that veered on the vain, it was all too easily dismissed by our puzzled Albanian colleagues. The proposed astronomical budget did not register with us and even less with our colleagues, but understandably our Albanian partners felt they should define the design, sustaining the nationalist narrative of the 1988 exhibition in the extant (closed and damp) museum.

Fortunately, while the Institute of Archaeology showed no willingness to engage in a planned programme for protecting Butrint as a place, including site conservation, the local official responsible for the Institute of Monuments,

Telemark Llakana, working with his director in Tirana, Valter Shtylla, took a different approach. Llakana lobbied us for the first conservation initiatives with the Foundation in 1995 (Hodges and Paterlini 2013). These included resources for woodland clearance to protect walls that were endangered by invasive vegetation, an outline condition survey of the monuments including the churches with frescoes, and a condition survey of the mosaic pavements at the Baptistery. With support from the New York-based World Monuments Fund, these initiatives established priorities and monuments at risk, while re-invoking woodland management practices that had been standard annual exercises since the 1970s. By the end of 1996 the site was once again adequately managed in conservation terms, and a basic condition survey existed (Hodges and Paterlini 2013).

In 1995–96 one palpable conservation threat (which did not materialize) was a bid by the Institute of Archaeology for European Union funds to build a shed-like cover over the Baptistery in the heart of the wood. This scheme envisaged keeping the mosaic pavement exposed throughout the year, but failed to win support, perhaps because the concept involved using solar-power energy, generated by panels on the roof, to operate a pumping system to drain the Baptistery of ground water (which in winter tends to cover the monument up to 30 cm deep).

Apart from the conservation, however, the struggle with the Institute of Archaeology continued over five field seasons in 1994–96. Essentially permission from the Institute of Archaeology to excavate was denied. (This encouraged us to undertake a sequence of systematic surveys (Figure 4.2); see Chapter 3.) Any national research council or EU-funded research project would have failed after two years, but, following a flying visit by James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, in October 1995, the Butrint Foundation supported a third year of activities in 1996. President Wolfensohn's visit catapulted the project to the attention of President Berisha, and directly or indirectly, being an inimical micro-manager, he facilitated an amelioration in attitude. The first excavations now occurred, while conservation and presentational initiatives were developed quickly. From this year dates the first serious discussion of defining Butrint as exceptional within its country, by releasing the scheduled monuments to become a park. This exceptionalism now set the tone for the project and its implementation over the following decade.



Figure 4.2 Field surveying close to Saranda, 1995.

In May 1996 – as the World Bank championed tourist development at a donors’ conference in Tirana – the first site information panels were erected at Butrint and haughtily dismissed by a British travel writer, Robert Carver (‘I was sorry to see that British archaeologists had been allowed in to do their usual level best to destroy the delicate atmosphere by erecting large, ugly and quite unnecessary signboards at every point, token of the vanity of the archaeologists, which merely obscured the stones and statues about which they purported to inform’ (Carver 1998: 101)) (Figure 4.3). Our Albanian colleagues opined that the panels would be immediately stolen and repurposed in kitchens and cowsheds. They were mistaken; the panels stayed put. Information displayed in this way took on almost an instant sacred and trustworthy character. At the same time we prepared a full-colour site brochure



Figure 4.3 An example of the first site panels, erected in May 1996.

to promote Butrint and heritage attractions in the environs of Saranda, the entry-point to southern Albania. Alongside this, we embarked upon the first field survey in Albania – it did not then count for the Institute of Archaeology as archaeological fieldwork – resulting in the entire team being briefly arrested for espionage (somewhat bizarrely, on behalf of the Greeks).

We also consciously reached out to the emergent tourist companies based in the neighbouring town of Saranda as well as to local communities in order to seek a constituency for our work in the face of the ongoing obstacles mounted by the Institute of Archaeology. Beginning in the second season, we lived in the village of Vrina, just 3 km from Butrint. Working with local communities gave us an important perspective on the internal tensions of this embryonic democracy. At this time in the 1990s, local people had no status at Butrint in the face of the government-supported archaeologists from Tirana (see later and Chapter 5) who, following their tradition from the Hoxha years, chose to live in isolation on the archaeological site itself, crammed into the tower in the castle on the acropolis. While on this mission, they were awarded *per diem* payments for being away from their homes. Tellingly, however, Butrint – contrary to Robert Carver's cynical travelogue noted earlier – was not damaged during the bitter uprising caused by the so-called 'pyramid crisis' of January–February 1997, although some of the archaeological stores were pilfered of minor objects (Carver 1998: 102). As best we could judge from later interviews, on one occasion the local community, no longer alienated by this national asset, actively attempted to protect it.

The struggle to implement our project was uncomfortable, often unpleasant, and initially without any mitigating factors. In retrospect, our neo-liberalism was verging on what Herzfeld has criticized as crypto-colonialism (2002), as we ignored rather than involved our Albanian colleagues in managerial decision-making. From our perspective, as we did not award them the fees they demanded, they refrained from embarking upon any genuine scientific collaboration. Nevertheless, by the end of the third year of the collaborative project in 1996, there existed an outline understanding of the archaeology of Butrint, an outline management plan for a park featuring the archaeological site, and, an unexpected bonus, an estimated fifteen out of a possible 100 households in Vrina had installed bathrooms as a result of the rents paid to accommodate the Foundation's team.

Phase 2: Making the park, 1998–2000

Once the pyramid crisis of early 1997 was over, help arrived from many quarters to accelerate the reconstruction of the ex-communist country. The development threat to Butrint bay had (at least temporarily) passed; now, the Unesco World Heritage site itself had to be safeguarded. Unesco, after a mission visit in October 1997, declared Butrint to be a 'World Heritage Site in Danger'. This category of inscription assumes concern and responsibility. The concern was promoted by the Greek archaeologists who excavated at Butrint during 1989–94 rather than the Butrint Foundation. Unesco, however, instructed the Butrint Foundation to shoulder the necessary actions arising from categorizing the site to be in peril. The World Monuments Fund also declared it to be endangered.

Orchestrated by the Foundation, the World Bank and the Getty Grant Program, under the umbrella of Unesco's new inscription, supported an initiative to launch a public planning exercise for the site in order to create a national park. The new Socialist government of Fatos Nano, thanks to his Minister of Culture, Arta Dade, supported this. The planning exercise would be about the place and its continuing threats posed by developers, as opposed to being about an archaeological site. More than its simple economic instrumentality, we advocated to the donors and Albanian authorities that Butrint might also proffer a seemingly novel vehicle for national pride, spiritual recovery and reconciliation. Albania was not alone in sensing the national significance of cultural heritage in a fragile political environment. Lynn Meskell has captured a similar spirit in South Africa during the 1990s in her description of the Kruger National Park. As Meskell noted, it is far from straightforward to change attitudes to cultural heritage: 'capitalizing culture, literally the attempt to transform culture's liquid assets into permanent heritage capital, has proven more challenging than promoting and consuming the modern and global imperatives of nature conservation and biodiversity' (2012: 208).

The public planning meeting took the form of a values-based workshop at Saranda funded by the Getty Grant Program (and supported by Unesco and the World Bank) in April 1998 to determine Butrint's significance (cf. Sullivan 1997) (Figure 4.4). Lord Rothschild's involvement, and the world's undoubted curiosity about Albania as a hitherto closed country doubtless led to the substantial international support for this meeting. The intended outcome was a management



Figure 4.4 A photograph taken at the April 1998 Saranda meeting.

strategy leading to the creation of Butrint as a national park (cf. Demas 2002). Creating an exceptional place, a park – the other – was then an unquestioned aim that today might not have been championed so readily. As a result the Saranda meeting was not a ‘meeting of experts ... best ... seen as a piece of political theatre in which archaeologists (and conservation professionals) played the role of the white-coated specialist on a television commercial for an over-the-counter cold remedy’ (Joyce 2005: 267). On the contrary, several senior (as well as diverse) Albanian participants, perhaps managed artfully by the foreign participants, concluded that first and foremost the magical spirit of Butrint should be protected as its asset of greatest significance. The gravitational pull of the monuments themselves was resisted. Instead the context, the spirit of ruins in an unexpected woodland surrounded on three sides by water, was prioritized. Why did our Albanian colleagues arrive at our conclusion in their focus groups? Simply because, they admitted, they still felt the magic of this place that they had been so fortunate to visit in communist times, when it was essentially in a frontier zone. Before 1990, Albanians needed a visa to visit Butrint. With a certain nostalgia, they wanted an unaltered Butrint, preserved as

it was when they were school children. It was the cultural freedom associated with this place, rather than its natural beauty, that induced these warm feelings (cf. Eagleton 2000: 4–5). Did we really grasp this cultural distinction at the time, or did we wish that we had chanced upon a convergence in appreciating the importance of protecting a naturally beautiful place?

The most immediate outcome of the meeting was the decision to prepare a landscape plan for Butrint and its setting. This was drawn up by Jamie Buchanan, the landscape architect who designed the Rocca San Silvestro park in Tuscany. From this evolved a formal proposal to enlarge the World Heritage site to include a buffer zone, encompassing an area of 29 km² of the contested hinterland (Hodges and Martin 2001; Martin 2001; 2002). With strong support from the Ministry of Culture as well as Unesco representatives, this enlargement was formally inscribed at Fez in December 1999. Advancing the new vision for Butrint was accelerated by my appointment as an adviser to the then new Minister of Culture, Edi Rama, thanks to a grant from the US-based (George Soros) Open Society Foundation. With the Minister's ear and access to the highest levels of decision-making in Tirana, notwithstanding the Kosovo crisis in 1999, we were able to designate the enlarged Unesco area as Albania's first archaeological park (in March 2000).

Rock piles were deployed to define the new Butrint National Park (BNP) bounds, and a giant boulder was set beside the entrance at Ksamili inscribed with a park logo, an aquatic bird from the Butrint Baptistry.

The Saranda workshop in April 1998 also had specific recommendations for the management and conservation of Butrint's monuments. A small illustrated exhibition of these proposals was installed in the entrance of Saranda's most frequented venue, the Post Office, in September 1998. This was essentially a draft version of a Butrint management plan (Martin 2001). The proposal that attracted most attention focused upon the ground water. We contended that the ground water did not damage the buildings, therefore pumping the water out of the *cavea* of the Theatre, for example, contravened sustaining the spirit of Butrint. A better solution was to keep the water clean as opposed to suffering the perpetual noise from a pump. Cleaning the water also provided employment whereas a pump did not. At a second workshop in September 1998 dedicated to conserving the celebrated Baptistry pavement, the participants arrived at the same conclusion. Pumping the water from this premier monument, it was

concluded, would destroy the spirit of the place; it was better to open the mosaic pavement each summer and train local conservators to maintain it. Again, the latter provided employment and the intervention involved was minimal.

In this unsettled period, though, the Butrint Foundation was unable to pursue any large-scale archaeological investigations or to carry out either conservation on any scale or indeed train any conservators. Nevertheless, the Institute of Monuments' local director, Telemark Llakana, skilfully maintained a small woodland management team and carried out limited conservation projects if these were urgent (working with the Foundation's support) (Figure 4.5).

These restricted initiatives appealed to the Foundation's patient donors: the virtues of a romantic wilderness (the essence of its spirit as a place) were harnessed to the scientific inventorying of the archaeological site. Yet behind this apparent moral position lurked a fundamental Mediterranean problem not restricted to Butrint. The local representatives in the 1998 workshop (from the regional town of Saranda, not the local villages) in the following months openly rejected this romanticism. The critics accused the new (Socialist party) government with selling the archaeological site to 'Prince' Rothschild. They appealed somewhat hysterically through the Albanian media to a global audience sensitive to the political incorrectness of neo-colonialism in this fragile Balkan republic. The aim of the opposition was transparent. Some of their accusatory Chinese whispers might stick. The local representatives wanted a marina at Butrint as well as golf courses. They found an ally in the new Director of the Institute of Archaeology, who was resisting any depletion of his bailiwick by the proposed creation of the park. As local stakeholders, who were now experiencing an impoverishment unimaginable during the Hoxha era, the local view was that this was their chance to exploit Albania's premier cultural asset. Development of this kind had been the hallmark of the Mediterranean since the 1960s in Croatia, Montenegro, Greece and Italy. Why not now Albania? The new Minister of Culture (and subsequent Prime Minister), Edi Rama, who was acutely aware of Albania's reputation as a rogue state in the aftermath of the 1997 civil uprising, over-ruled the dissenters to authorize the country's first archaeological park. Rama favoured a first-world solution, supported by two eminently rich individuals, and he wanted the



Figure 4.5 Telemark Llakana and Lords Sainsbury and Rothschild, 30 October 1995.

solution fast. He negotiated a set of compromises to devise the park. The compromise? Essentially, the Butrint Foundation (with its distinguished trustees) was encouraged to support the shaping of the park, bringing international esteem and much-needed connections to the government in its dealings with major agencies and foreign enterprise. At the same time, to soften the political impact in Tirana, the national cultural heritage institutions were given an opportunity to receive funding from the relatively small revenues from the then minimal tourism at Butrint. A new park administration, composed of these national representatives, was created in the oldest building in Saranda, the former customs house in front of the marina. Formerly a small museum, and looted in 1997, it had been emptied to house Kosovan refugees in the spring of 1999, and was therefore available. In retrospect, the legislation put in place to create this new administration was expedient to deal with the competing institutional visions of Butrint, and therefore generated a decade of conflict regarding the use of the visitor ticket revenue.

During this politically unstable period there was no will on the part of the government to involve local communities in the new Butrint National Park. Villages in the old cross-border corridor were deemed to be dangerous, and education levels were considered to be low. Only remittances from the men working abroad mitigated the abject poverty. The ministry, as a result, resisted any attempt to involve villagers from within the park in strategic planning exercises (cf. Bluestone 2000; Demas 2002: 27). These conditions provided the niche for a resilient Italian NGO, Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli (CISP), operating from 1999 to 2004, to design and initiate small-scale development programmes in Butrint's community hinterland. When CISP closed in 2005, its pioneering efforts persuaded the Foundation to adopt broadly the same aims.

With hindsight, the exclusion of the local communities was a normal action by the Tirana-based administration, and prolonged centre-periphery (and ethnic) relations from the Hoxha era. However, it was accentuated by the ministry's appointment of a park director in 1999 (with the Foundation's support) who had no affinity with the local communities. On the contrary, his agency was motivated by one purpose only – to benefit personally from this minor political prize. In accepting the government's regulations for administering the new park, the discrete compromises made by the Butrint

Foundation at the time seemed to be a small price to pay for effectively ending the mass tourist development proposals advocated since 1992 by local stakeholders. However, it would take another decade to embed transparent financial management in the new park structure. It is clear now that at the same time, the Butrint Foundation expended only limited resources on capacity-building to create a new managerial direction for the Butrint National Park. Over the course of its first eighteen months in 1999–2001, a British project officer supported by World Bank funding attempted to train and oversee the first stages of the new administration. But the Albanian administration plainly lacked the requisite skills to manage an entity in line with both international conservation standards and the expectations of an international visitorship. In retrospect, these new officials should have been sent on instructional courses abroad, but this promised to be far too expensive for the Ministry or the Foundation. Meanwhile, as of April 2000, with support from the Packard Humanities Institute the Butrint Foundation embarked on a major phase of research excavations, aiming to define a new historical paradigm for the site, and to train a new generation of Albanian archaeologists.

Funding, of course, determined priorities. Looking back now, the choice of priorities and the serendipitous winning of donor funds reveal our limited understanding of the social circumstances in Albania less than a decade after the fall of communism.

Phase 3: Developing the park infrastructure, 2000–2007

The creation of the Butrint National Park in 1999 facilitated major developments at Butrint over the following seven years. In 1999 tourist numbers amounted to just a few hundred, so the outcome of the Saranda workshop in 1998 in the form of a management plan seemed wholly idealistic or visionary, depending upon your point of view.

The management plan (2001–5) (Martin 2001) was printed in English and Albanian. It attempted to be a comprehensive road map for Butrint for a new era. Its executive summary was as follows:

The principal objective identified in the Management Plan is to make Butrint a world-class site.

Fourteen other objectives, together with specific points for action in Phase I (2000–5) and Phase II (2006–10), are identified in the management plan. These cover, to cite the plan:

1. Conservation of the unique combination of archaeology and nature, which gives Butrint its atmosphere
2. Promotion of the Butrint National Park
3. Setting up of an effective local management system
4. The archaeology of the National Park
5. Monument conservation
6. Conservation of the environment
7. Bio-diversity
8. The Butrint National Park as a visitor destination
9. Extending the tourist season at Butrint
10. The Butrint National Park as an educational resource
11. The Butrint National Park within the regulatory and planning framework
12. Butrint as the focus for the development of sustainable tourism in the region
13. Transport and communication links
14. Sustainable development in non-tourism sectors, particularly agriculture and fishing.

The summary also explains that: ‘implementation is critical. The Butrint National Park management needs to be provided with the resources and legal instruments to enable it to carry out essential tasks. These include the conservation and improvement of the Butrint site so that it remains a vital part of Albania’s heritage and at the same time, becomes a resource for the economic regeneration of the region.’ The plan was tightly drafted and its goals ambitious given the experience of the first decade of Albanian democratic government.

That said, some Albanians lamented that they had just been liberated of five-year plans. Almost all the members of the Butrint National Park board and its administration treated it as a set of rules made by foreigners for foreigners. Before long the park management was bolstered after 2002 by a new Minister of Culture, who set about leveraging not only Butrint’s status but its ticket revenues. This led to conflict with the Butrint Foundation between 2003 and 2005, triggering a debate in the national parliament in 2003. The Foundation suffered during this controversy, but with resolute support from the trustees,

focused upon implementing the management plan and activity was commissioned on each component part.

Significantly, regulatory planning within a regional context – in the hands of the Albanian authorities – was not eagerly pursued. Lobbying was needed to encourage them to focus upon developing institutional structures in order to safeguard the Foundation's initiatives. The Foundation's efforts were concentrated on protecting Butrint's context. This involved lobbying for the paving of the road from the Greek border near Konispoli via Skala to a point north-east of Saranda, close to the high medieval monastery of Mesopotam (Figure 4.6). The road belonged to an EU-funded plan first projected in 1996. Our logic was that this road needed to bypass the Butrint National Park rather than, as some planners had proposed, follow the eastern side of Lake Butrint and therefore intrude into the undeveloped buffer zone around the archaeological site. We lobbied locally; we lobbied the EU sections in Tirana with its repeated turnover of programme officers; and, eventually, Lord Rothschild himself lobbied the Italian prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, as the road-building project came under Italian jurisdiction. Berlusconi, apparently, was supportive and even visited Butrint in 2002. The lobbying succeeded, a small but significant victory for ensuring Butrint's enduring spirit of place. Seven years later this inner bypass was surfaced and came into use in 2010, offering a fast route north from the ferry terminal at Igoumenitsa (in Greece) to points in south-west Albania.

As the infrastructure improved, all parts of the buffer zone came under the renewed gaze of Tirana's increasingly wealthy oligarchs. In 2006 the Foundation confronted the threat to Cape Stylo, the unspoilt headland to the south of Butrint, by proclaiming its importance as a prehistoric site. We crossed the rickety metal bridge of the Pavllas river (Figure 5.7), followed the old tank track by now employed by contraband farmers, and undertook a major field project, thereby giving this rugged cape a new historic status as a place.

The Foundation also undertook surveys to encourage planning initiatives, such as a traffic survey between Saranda and Konispoli over the Vivari Channel ferry. This led to the Foundation funding a refurbishment of the ferry in 2002. Meanwhile, little attention had been given to aiding the agricultural and fishing industries, and eventually during the period 2000–3 the local farmers sent milk as contraband to Greece by way of Cape Stylo. Like other 'banned

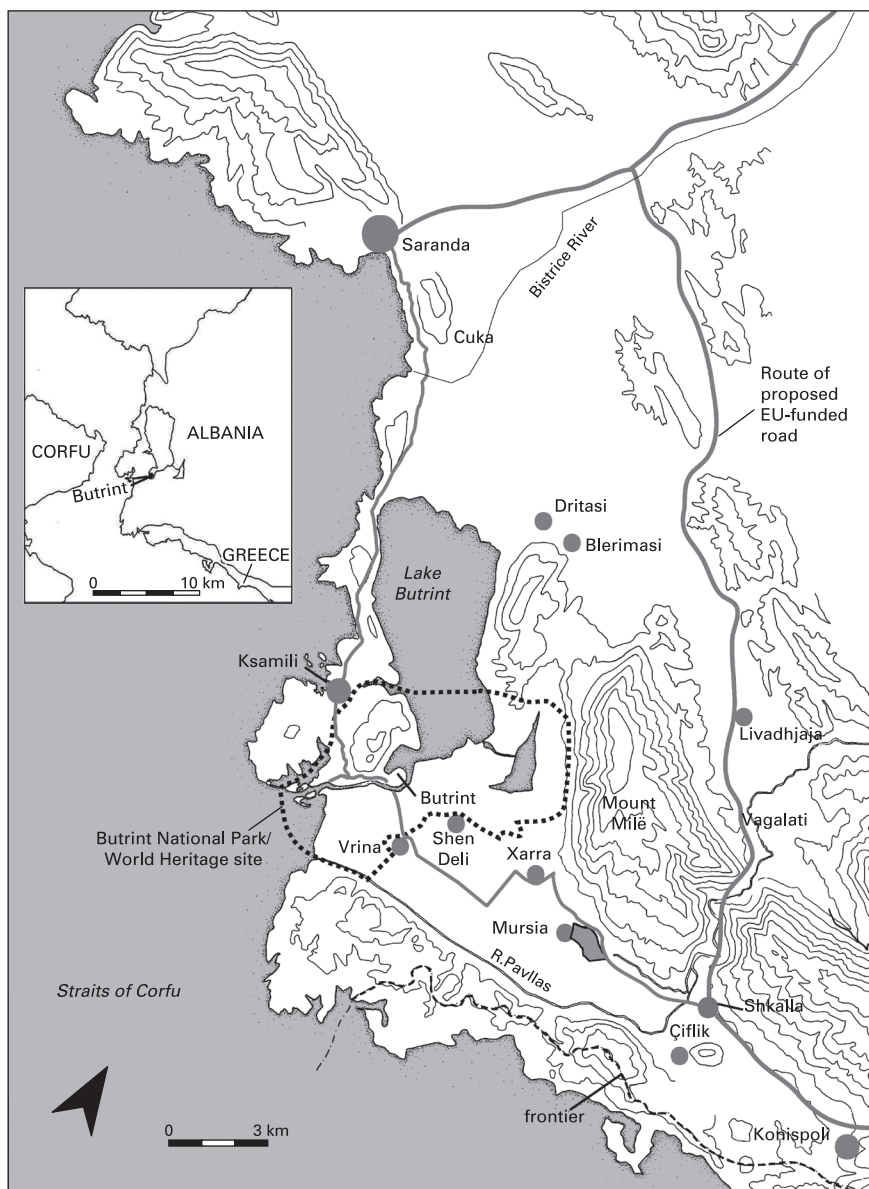


Figure 4.6 Map showing the 1999 proposal for the new network of roads.

substances', the flow of milk was terminated by government intervention, as Albania sought to operate more effectively with Greece.

Alongside developing the park's institutional place, archaeological research and training in the park proceeded from April 2000 on a major scale, thanks to support from the Packard Humanities Institute. Major research excavations were undertaken in the upper and lower town, as well as in its suburb on the Vrina Plain, and at the villa at Diaporit on the shore of Lake Butrint. Smaller surveys also took place each season during this period. The ten-week campaigns involved up to 100 specialists and excavators, and included an annual training school for Albanian students (with, in time, a textbook prepared by alumni (Hysa and Molla 2009)), which in turn promoted Butrint extensively inside and outside Albania.

Conservation training accompanied these excavations. A conservation condition survey was undertaken of all Butrint's monuments (see Martin 2001; Hodges and Paterlini 2013). Regular low-cost management of the monuments was soon put in place, following a comprehensive condition survey (for the management plan (Martin 2001)) made by the conservation architect, Richard Andrews. From the early 2000s the park administration included a conservator, Albana Hakani, who took over from Telemark Llakana after he retired in 2001. The conservator sustained the woodland management programme, and significantly, with the Foundation's support, created capacity-building training schools. Wall conservation and mosaic conservation were taught at summer schools with experienced programme instructors during the period 2005–7. In October 2007 ICCROM supported Butrint's conservation officer to manage a South-East Europe Conservation course at the World Heritage site. After this, major conservation interventions followed at other key points: the Baptistery mosaic pavement (2006), the Well of Junia Rufina (2007), the nymphaeum (2005), the Triangular Fortress (2004–5), the Venetian Tower (2002–3), the Water Gate (2007), and the remains on the Vrina Plain (2006). In addition, the excavations of the Triconch Palace, covering nearly a third of a hectare, were completed in 2004 and were conserved and transformed into a presentable archaeological site in 2005. Part of the Triconch Palace conservation plan, designed by Richard Andrews and implemented by Albana Hakani, included the stabilizing and conservation of all the buried mosaic pavements (Bowden and Hodges 2011: 8). In 2005 Hakani also oversaw the

backfilling and selective presentation of the maritime villa at Diaporit on the south-east corner of Lake Butrint, extensively excavated between 2000 and 2004 (cf. Hodges and Paterlini 2013).

In all these interventions, a strong effort was made to minimize the invasiveness of the conservation, to control the vegetation on a regular basis, to manage and clean the seasonal ground water, and to back-fill archaeological excavations with the notable exception of the Triconch Palace (cf. Bowden and Hodges 2011: 7–8). Above all, more than a dozen Albanian conservators were provided with basic training in contemporary techniques and a similar number of local workmen were trained in the basics of stone and mortar restoration.

Other initiatives involving the environment of Butrint's context were also pursued. New trails were put in place in 2005, following consultancy reports commissioned on the environment and its bio-diversity. Importantly, in 2003 the Foundation also won support from the international bio-diversity agency RAMSAR for an even larger environmentally protected zone encompassing Lake Butrint and its immediate surroundings.

The relentless promotion of the park proceeded nationally and internationally. This included the making of a thirty-minute film by the Butrint Foundation in 2003 for Albanian television, designed to attract Albanian visitorship. Visitor amenities were overhauled. These included the refurbishment of the museum (Renton 2006), and by 2007, after much lobbying, the first toilets at Butrint. New signage with illustrative materials made by Studio Inklink of Florence (known for their vivid reconstructions of archaeological sites in Rome and Tuscany) were made in 2003 and mounted around the site in 2005, to be replicated at other archaeological sites throughout Albania thereafter. A website was constructed, although before 2010 few used it. Brochures and guides were commissioned and printed for all types of visitors. Special attention was paid to working with local schools and educating the tour guides from the Saranda-based companies hired by international companies. Work began to connect tourism at Butrint with Gjirokastra, following a personal intervention by President Rexhep Meidani.

As Albania adapted to being more international and European in its outlook, so did Butrint. Investment in the park attracted increased year-on-year visitorship, consistent with the management plan. Notwithstanding Albania's status from 1997 to 2002 as a dangerous place to travel, tourists began to visit in

groups from Corfu and from cruise ships. The Foundation, having commissioned an intelligence report from Dr. Jenny Holland (cf. 1998, 2000) on tourism in 1999, invested in what has become known as actor-networking (with the excavation reports helping in the promotion): 'many people and things interacting as cogs and wheels' facilitated by agents building constituent entities, giving credence to the value of visiting an erstwhile pariah state (van der Duim 2007: 971–2). Local tour companies were eager to seek the Foundation's advice. Corfu's tourist board, although initially reluctant, soon grasped how it might broaden their holiday products (cf. Alford 1998). Meanwhile, the withdrawal of advisories on travel in Albania as of 2002 certainly helped greatly. Following this, individual tourism as well as group tours around the country increased year-on-year. Finally, Albanians who had been to Butrint as school children were now aware of its other-worldliness thanks to the television transmission of concerts and the Miss Albania competition from the theatre. More Albanians acquired cars after 2000 and began exploring their country. It was not difficult to envisage an incremental growth in tourism and therefore the need for more tourist infrastructure. Plainly infrastructure – local roads, parking and toilets, for example – was a problem. Improving that infrastructure, however, called for investment and commitment. Herein lay an impasse. Managing the park team to serve its sustainability was no less challenging. With limited to no direction by the park authorities, the Butrint Foundation felt compelled to ventriloquize the way forward.

Constant national publicity for Butrint, chiefly because of its otherness in a transition economy, in many ways compensated for the absence of agency (other than in conservation) by the park administration. The return of several Roman Imperial sculptures that had been looted and sold in 1991, almost certainly by erstwhile guards or others then familiar with Butrint (subsistence looting), accentuated the growing importance of Butrint as an international place. One portrait was recovered from a Manhattan collector, while three others were confiscated by police in Greece. In both cases the Butrint Foundation's ability to encourage the Ministry of Culture to take specific procedural actions resulted in the swift repatriation, and encouraged the Albanians to recognize the significance of their patrimony (Gilkes 2002). Most effort was focused upon controlling the ticket revenue. Nonetheless, the perceived sense of Butrint as a tourist magnet that was aiding the re-making of

Albania as a country in foreign eyes, drew the increasing interest of politicians, ambassadors and major visitors. Successive Albanian Prime Ministers entertained high-profile visitors here, arriving from Tirana by helicopter to avoid the uncomfortable seven-hour drive. Such was the success of these activities that in 2005, Unesco sponsored a meeting at Apollonia to create at least six other archaeological parks following the Butrint model.

Increasing visitorship to Butrint began to have an impact upon the region. The multiplier effect could only be roughly gauged. Community projects within the park, as already noted, were introduced by the Italian organization CISP in 1999 and then advanced after its closure by the Butrint Foundation from 2005 to 10. Three villages – Shën Dëlli, Vrina and Xarra – are situated within the national park and in 2008 had populations of 383, 1,204 and 2,362 respectively. Ksamili, on the northern edge of the park, possesses a fluctuating population of up to 10,000. In Shën Dëlli – a village created after the 1997 uprising in the ruins of a collective farm – poverty levels were some of the highest in Albania, with an average family income (in 2008) of approximately US\$200 a month; in Vrina, incomes were US\$500 and in Xarra US\$800 (Phelps 2010, citing the World Bank's *Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Clean-Up Project: Butrint Management Plan* 2010). The Foundation's major community-engagement projects included an on-site community shop where locals might sell handmade products, school visits to the site as part of school curriculum, and environmental-awareness activities.² Additionally, between 2005–08 the park began to employ upwards of fifty locals on a seasonal basis as workmen, ticket vendors and tour guides. At the same time local fishermen and farmers received special fishing and agriculture rights to work within the park, demonstrating its interest in supporting local industries.

The Foundation also aided the schools in the hinterland of the archaeological site. Beginning in 2001 with the refurbishment of Vrina school with funds from the Japanese Worldmate Fund, it followed this with the introduction of a Schools Programme (Figure 4.7). The programme aimed to integrate Butrint into the local schools' curriculum so that teachers could help their students to recognize and appreciate the site's vital role in their history and future. In 2008 a school activity book based on the site's primary monuments was distributed to every child attending school within the area of the park. These small yet positive steps were well received.



Figure 4.7 The Vrina junior school, refurbished with funds from the Worldmate Foundation, May 2001.

A central issue remained unstated but ever-present. Was Albania really adapting to a post-communist moment with the adoption of the Butrint model? It was not. In fact the recidivist management of the Butrint National Park restricted Albanian ministerial investment in the park to the bare minimum. None of the succession of Ministers of Culture in office following Edi Rama's departure in 2000 took the initiative to rein in their managers at Butrint or to promote the place as a capacity-building project. Their expedient response was solely to exploit the connection to the Foundation's trustees while turning a blind eye to the loss of the ticket revenues. In short, the Butrint Foundation's mission was tolerated because its operations benefited certain Albanian stakeholders financially.

Nevertheless, by 2007, ten years after the civil uprising, the magic of the place, as identified at the Saranda meeting in 1998, was secure. By this time, following much national promotion, Butrint was secured in the popular Albanian psyche.

Phase 4: Towards a sustainable future, 2008–12?

With increasing collaboration now possible, and the availability of a cohort of workmen under competent management after 2005, it was time to reflect upon the future of the Butrint Foundation. By 2008 Albania had ostensibly outgrown its transition status and on the eve of the global financial crisis beginning that September, the future of the Park seemed set. Conscious of the need to

encourage the Albanian authorities to take the lead at Butrint, in 2009 the Foundation began to signal an exit strategy. Over the following four years the Foundation effected the transition from an operating NGO to a small grant-giving entity. All involved in the Foundation were of one mind: it belonged to a transition period and it should not become permanent.

This change of direction coincided with the downsizing of the annual field project and a concomitant emphasis upon publication. In the back of our minds as archaeologists were the long-running Mediterranean projects based around dig-houses that had clearly lost their way, published little, and suffered a lack of direction. No less significant was the criticism of the NGO as an instrument of change: 'The rules of the international NGO world seem to stay pretty much the same. Does anyone believe that NGOs still aims "to work themselves out of a job"?' (Edwards 2008: 47). The elephant in the room, Edwards has written, is that NGOs favour 'institutional imperatives' such as maximizing income, opportunities and profile over 'developmental imperatives such as handing over the baton, empowering marginalized groups, because donors have demanded this' (2008: 47).

The success of the park as a visitor attraction brought its own impetus to force a change in ministerial ownership of the place. Visitor numbers were increasing significantly, heading gradually up towards the 150,000 who came in 2015. This growth was having a marked seasonal multiplier effect upon Saranda and Gjirokastra, as well as upon the local communities. Increased numbers galvanized the Foundation's efforts to focus the park upon conservation.

During these years the Foundation updated and expanded the condition survey of Butrint's monuments made in 2000–1. Special attention was given to the kilometres of fortification walls. Many sections of the defences and their gates were cleaned, repaired and stabilized, and this work provided the opportunity for a cohort of artisans to be trained in basic conservation tasks. A number of monuments also received renewed interventions, but perhaps the greatest efforts were given to woodland management, path-making, landscaping, trench-filling and spoil-removal. One major project involved safe-guarding Ali Pasha's Castle at the mouth of the Vivari Channel that had suffered subsidence in 2008; it was stabilized after a major architectural study in 2010–11.

The positive new direction was interrupted by a reversal that harked back to the struggle of the 1990s. After the 2009 election victory for Prime Minister Berisha,

the government unusually deployed its own resources (as opposed to borrowed funds) to indicate its interest in developing the buffer zone protected by the 1999 Unesco inscription (arising from the 1998 Saranda workshop described earlier). It was a genuine alarm. In 2010 a new road was constructed through several kilometres of the buffer zone from the northern entrance to the park at the village of Ksamili as far as Butrint, significantly meeting no resistance from Unesco. After lobbying, however, Unesco encouraged the preparation of a new management plan for the site, and in its initial deliberations – possibly as a result of a Butrint Foundation community census in 2010 – local stakeholders were involved.³ Completion of the road coincided with the draining of the wetlands, leading to the fear that the government might sell off the area to Tirana-based clans for development as seaside conglomerates. Once again the Butrint Foundation resorted to using the national and international media as well as the diplomacy provided by selective embassies, and the immediate threat to this conflicted landscape soon dissipated.

A new initiative occurred in 2012 when the Albanian-American Enterprise Fund (AAEF), having signed an accord with the Albanian government, began supporting the Butrint National Park on a project-by-project basis. The AAEF was and is a new form of NGO in Albania; while it is supported by trustees based principally in New York, its direction and local management lie with trained Albanians. The first AAEF initiative confronted the decade-long issue of corruption. Ticket revenues needed to be transparently managed. To do this, the AAEF funded the installation of electronic ticket-gates beside a new ticket office (and makeshift bookshop). As a result, after lobbying from the Foundation and AAEF, the government agreed to 90 per cent of the park's income being retained for use by the park. This act of ministerial decentralization, albeit under pressure from two NGOs, hopefully bodes well in the short term, and certainly will help to safeguard Butrint.

Discussion

The Butrint Foundation's project at Butrint has been an important scientific and an uncomfortable learning experience. Its success can be measured from the outcomes of the two main objectives. First, the large excavations and their

fulsome publication have established the importance of the place in the Adriatic Sea region, giving it a lasting scientific prominence and providing a new narrative history for the place (see Chapter 3). Publications in Albanian, English and Italian for different audiences reinforce this status. Citations in international publications reinforce this achievement. Second, Butrint has been visited by almost half a million people since the workshop in Saranda in April 1998. More than half of these visitors will have been Albanian. In abstract terms, the archaeological park has certainly brought revenue from growing numbers of visitors and, through the multiplier effect, led to local as well as national employment. In simple terms, the Foundation met the objectives it set itself in 1993.

Let us now consider critically how the project affected three different aspects of the place and its stakeholders.

Sustainable conservation

Limited access to Butrint – first principally by boat before 1959, when the road was built for Khrushchev’s visit (Hodges 2009), and then until 1991, because it was effectively in a frontier zone accessible only with permission – almost certainly restricted the temptation to reconstruct its excavated archaeological monuments. Unlike the Graeco-Roman city of Apollonia near Fier, for example, there was instead an emphasis at Butrint upon stabilizing the monuments and mosaic pavements. Reconstruction using concrete is almost absent. In addition, Butrint was fortunate in its local management from the 1970s through to the twenty-first century. Telemark Llakana (in many modest and discreet ways an admirable successor to Ugolini’s overseers in the period 1928–36, Giacomo Franz and Alfredo Nuccitelli) managed the Institute of Monuments’ operation at Butrint for thirty years from the 1970s until 2001, providing an essential and intelligent continuity during the destabilizing early 1990s when all kinds of eccentric and inappropriate projects were being considered. His agency should not be undervalued. He instinctively comprehended that ‘the greatest challenge to pursuing a values-based approach to planning is acknowledging that values are mutable and there are few absolutes in terms of what is right or wrong’ (Demas 2002: 49). One ‘absolute’, the greatest problem at Butrint also happens to be what makes it an especially beautiful place, namely the vegetation that is prodigiously nurtured by the abundant ground water.

Collaborating initially with Llakana and then subsequently assisting the creation of a new generation of conservators trained in the importance of minimalist and reversible techniques, the conservation promoted by the Butrint Foundation has been a critical element in sustaining Ugolini's thoughtful legacy for modern visitors. With regular cycles of wall maintenance and woodland management, Butrint has become sustainable. It has survived attempts to win EU funding to drain the Theatre and cover the Great Basilica that would have irreparably damaged each monument as well as altered the spirit of Butrint. It has also outlived the temptation to gentrify Butrint, turning the woodland into an anonymous suburban park with neat, cemented paths. It still feels unspoilt (though this of course is artificial), and as Ugolini might have wished, the ruins retain an identity as a place for romantic meditation (Hodges and Paterlini 2013).

Centre versus local community

Identity affects communities and their opportunity to engineer their national and local economies. The World Heritage List created at the Unesco general conference of 1972 in order to safeguard sites of outstanding universal value was an awareness-raising convention, intended to galvanize financial support for the protection of designated sites. It also aimed to establish a fund for this purpose, involving individuals, private and public foundations, and nation-states. The convention owed much to the US national park system (indeed the convention was signed 100 years to the day from the founding anniversary of the American Park Service). The model was unambiguous: 'economically, the US national parks remain an enormous engine for tourism revenue and tourism-related jobs' (Comer 2006: 26). National parks in the United States are supported by tax dollars. But these are protected as tangible portions of the national heritage. It has 'succeeded as well as it has in no small part because of the role played by conservationists in mediating between the interests of the business sector and local, usually traditional, communities. The workforce at US national parks is drawn about equally from local people and the well-educated specialists who relocate to the remote areas where most national parks are situated . . . [T]hese staff members . . . are typically motivated by what they see as the opportunity to play a role in an important effort to preserve

irreplaceable resources. They occupy a middle ground between the interests of traditional groups and those of businesses and bureaucracies and knit these together in a common social network' (Comer 2006: 27). Balancing the interests of long-term preservation, while involving local communities, especially in the business of tourism, invariably has involved the mediation of government. In Albania, until very recently, governments have simply been incapable of facilitating good practice.

This separation between the state and its communities fostered an absence of trust and led to poor investment in local institutions (cf. Holland 1998). Over a decade later, little had changed as this ongoing problem was identified by many of the respondents to Dana Phelps' survey of (local) community engagement with Butrint made in 2010. Nearly all respondents from the park's villages had visited the Butrint Museum and most villagers had had a comprehensive tour of the site. The majority of respondents from Shën Dëlli and Vrina said that they or the community was making an income from the site. However, this was not the case for Xarra, a more distant village, where more respondents felt they were not involved. This is not a surprise, considering that the majority of the workmen and handicraft producers come from Shën Dëlli. Many residents of Xarra expressed resentment towards the park's (Tirana) management for not engaging the community more and helping them to benefit from tourism at Butrint (cf. Phelps forthcoming).

This widely acknowledged separation between Tirana and this distant frontier region, with its many ethnic minorities, puts western-trained archaeologists with a multi-vocal view of the past in a difficult position. In our case we were unprepared for the recidivist nationalism and inflexible, homogeneous approach to the place. Before 2010 local rights were adamantly rejected by representatives of the Ministry of Culture as well as the cultural heritage organizations. As outsiders we found it difficult to intervene to realign this. Concurrently, our attempts to serve all audiences within Albania attracted only diffidence in central government. In short, while we aimed to articulate our research and cultural heritage strategy for the widest possible audiences (using television, the press and digital media), for internal political purposes we were regularly accused of being colonialists. The unedifying monument erected in Ksamili in 2010 – a village that incidentally had benefited from hosting hundreds of Butrint Foundation team-members to Butrint's

archaeologists – gives us cause for hope. Dedicated to past archaeologists, Luigi Maria Ugolini as well as Dhimosten Budina and Hasan Ceka, it purports to celebrate these scholars as placemakers who indirectly through tourism aided this village at the entrance to the Butrint National Park. Ugolini, interestingly, is now viewed as a founding father of Butrint rather than a fascist imperialist. A Czech-sponsored film of his life, made at Butrint, was welcomed in the mid-2000s. One suspects that if his bronze statue could be found, it would be readily re-erected. Paradoxically, we might speculate that Hoxha's inscription (Fig. 2.7) is not likely to reappear in the immediate future, even though the import of its ideology survives the plaque itself.

The NGO: a challenge to the academic (archaeological) community?

We live in a confused era in archaeology. The neo-liberal cultural heritage industry needs extensively excavated sites to attract visitors. These should be managed to modern standards in terms of conservation and presentation (cf. Herzfeld 2010). The industry requires excavations made on the grand scale of old-fashioned archaeology, rather than field surveys or incomprehensible trenching. The grand scale, though, is inconsistent with the current human and financial resources of modern archaeologists in the academy. Finding resources to excavate, publish, conserve at present archaeological sites is realistically beyond the present university archaeologist. So what is the answer? There is a place, of course, for small-scale archaeological research managed by and for university departments, but running research excavations and pursuing community engagement, for example, are ostensibly very different operations requiring different skill-sets. This, then, is the context for the NGO, an operation with an explicit purpose that functions in parallel to the rhythm of contemporary universities.

The Butrint Foundation has unwittingly been an organic experiment in this emerging archaeological arena. Let us examine its characteristics because these are notably different from a university department or a small business.

First, an NGO is subject to strict reviews (regular meetings) by its trustees and an annual audit. Such business-like strictures are alien to most university operations.

Second, its operations, like those of similar organizations in Albania in myriad social and economic sectors, have promoted an universalistic ethos rather than furthered the interests of its members, and it occupies its own space within the state (cf. Heins 2008: 4). As such it has attempted to nest within the interstices of power in order to modify the way in which power is exercised. In practical terms, these operations mean dealing directly with government, the media and with other agencies, all of which in a fragile transition economy is both essential and extraordinarily time-consuming.

As new studies of NGO practice reveal, this type of entity brings with it a great deal of baggage. In many ways it is akin to development politics and the binary opposite of the archaeological mission in its dig house resistant to engaging with 'the Other'. In our case, our work led us to develop and promote (rightly and wrongly), to quote Volker Heins, 'liberal and social democratic values against the rule of increasingly anonymous and unaccountable forms of global governance' (Heins 2008: 5). On reflection, I might go further: NGOs like the Butrint Foundation '[are] actors involved in struggles over recognition against basic forms of abuse ... What observable NGO activities ... have in common is their shared opposition to elementary forms of abuse, disrespect and misrecognition' (Heins 2008: 10–11). Without the Butrint Foundation as a resilient champion, would Butrint be a non-place today, surrounded by anonymous vacation development (cf. Hodges 2014a)?

Like other NGOs operating in post-communist Albania, the Foundation assembled good researchers, many of whom might be described as guilty of wishful thinking on behalf of disempowered local constituents. They put themselves in the shoes of distant strangers, but their empathy was often laced with misanthropy. They spoke on behalf of others without being able to represent them. Their conspicuous goodness sometimes played into the hands of those with self-serving strategic interests. Nevertheless, being small and flexible, the Foundation managed like other small NGOs not only to mobilize moral feelings, but it also expropriated the moral outrage of the wider public by confining the arena of struggles over recognition to media campaigns, professional lobbying and the efficient delivery of human services.

There is no doubt that NGOs like the Foundation 'are bulwarks against public cynicism and the excesses of governments and corporations. But if they want to realize their better intentions, they will always have to tap into the

power of forces bigger than themselves' (Heins 2008: 14). It is scarcely surprising, then, that like other NGOs the Butrint Foundation has been seen by way of its moral intervention as the frontline force of imperial invention (cf. Hardt and Negri 2000: 36). The most conspicuous illustration of this was the erroneous accusation in several Albanian newspapers that 'Prince' Rothschild had purchased Butrint in 1998. The purpose was to de-rail the making of the Butrint National Park being championed by Prime Minister Fatos Nano. Similarly, as the Foundation confronted corruption in the park in March 2003, leading to a debate in the Albanian parliament, it triggered a fierce counter-attack in which the Foundation's staff (although not its trustees) was charged with being colonialist.

Finally, there was the issue of the Foundation's exit strategy. Having negotiated an Albanian future for the Butrint National Park, in the context of overt political corruption, there was concern among those Albanians trained by the Foundation. Many were anxious for the future of the park and its principles. These Albanians could not envisage any organization that might replace it. With this vacuum, the worst possible outcomes may well befall the archaeological park, as the Albanian authorities appear only to respond to exogenous forces. We shall see.

There is a simple and perhaps obvious lesson: two very different rhythms exist in the cultural heritage world – one for research practice that can be enacted through a university department, and one for developing the political structures that are fundamental to development and economic activity, wherein the NGO, as a free-standing agency, is an effective instrument. Melding the two together is a new challenge for the field of archaeology. This involves political and entrepreneurial skills, not entirely different from administration in the modern university arena. To meet industry needs as well as contemporary standards in archaeological practice, as in most professional fields in highly ranked universities, university archaeology departments need to embrace the NGO concept in order to create the institutional context to train its students in practical as opposed to theoretical issues.

* * *

Two lessons are apparent as a result of this twenty-year experience, and result from the often dispiriting trade-off between managing research and managing

the political relationships with the different communities engaged in this project.

First, as the archaeologist John Barrett observed: ‘Cultural policy is increasingly driven by the demands for preservation and conservation, but the routine emphasis upon the preservation of a material record for future generations must not over-look the need to encourage the sense of enquiry, urgency and skill with which the contemporary world desires to know the past’ (2006: 208). At Butrint we constructed a new Mediterranean narrative for the place (see Chapter 3). Privileged to have had an exceptional opportunity to select our sites for excavation, we provided a new interpretation of Butrint and our international intellectual peer group.

But beyond our trenches, given our neo-liberal aims in 1993 and what Herzfeld might have described as a crypto-colonial heritage strategy (cf. Byrne 2011: 147), how successful was this project? Did we substantively improve the quality of life for the diverse communities engaged directly or indirectly with the World Heritage site? Some alumni of the capacity-building programmes



Figure 4.8 Visitors studying a Studio Inklip panel in front of the Hellenistic and Roman buildings.

are employed in archaeology and cultural heritage throughout Albania. But, on the whole, the capacity-building in management that we had hoped for has not happened (cf. Comer 2012: 13–14). As for the local communities who might have benefited from tourism to Butrint, the trickle-down effects are limited to certain families living in the nearest villages (cf. Holland 2000). Perhaps as many as fifty families have found employment as a result of the project and its enduring tourist model. Without the adoption of effective governance to challenge the communist systems, which instilled local as well as national social values (as Amartya Sen calls them), the Foundation was unable to ensure the implementation of essential structural reforms, and create local economic growth (cf. Lewis and Kanji 2009: 53). In sum, while we successfully brought an actor-network approach to bear upon delivering tourists to Butrint, we failed at a grassroots level both to make the local community stakeholders in the project and to get the cultural heritage community to assert greater control over the stubbornly reactionary arena in which they worked. With this failure of empowerment, especially in and around the villages that encircle Butrint, it is hard to believe that the Butrint project will prove sustainable. This, then, makes these reflective recollections, our publications and archives all the more important because it is all too easy to imagine that in the near future the intellectual and political opposition we faced in Albania will be breached by local communities, cognizant of their economic agency within an irreversible globalization. But will these communities prize authentic assets like Butrint or turn them into an uninformed pastiche that devalues their economic value⁴? This distinctly uncomfortable conclusion begs a question that Unesco urgently needs to confront: can the past be managed effectively when Sen's 'social values and a sense of responsibility' to the world are absent (1999)? The final chapter departs from this question.

Eternal Butrint? Reflections on Its Future Sustainability

World Heritage demonstrates that the industry, craftsmanship, love and care of past civilizations were given to make their surroundings meaningful. This should never cease to fill us with wonder. The past can speak to us and help us to realize where we are going in the future.

Fielden and Jokilehto 1993: xi

Sir Bernard Fielden was a visionary. Could he really have envisaged that the success of World Heritage inscription as tourism has grown to be the world's premier industry? The future of World Heritage sites – and the Mediterranean as a region – is in the cloud. Globalization has arrived, even in Albania. Cloud-based global industries bring with it new rules and new opportunities. In this chapter I want to reflect on the Butrint Foundation project and its implications for the many, rather diverse, communities involved, recognizing that it was a pilot project of sorts in Mediterranean placemaking.

The next generation will face new economic challenges and increasing pressure upon many resources. In this context, economic prudence emphasizes that the stability of global cultural assets should not be undervalued, as is normally the case. Traditionally managed by governments using scientists and managers, now is the time to attach the sustainability of these assets thoughtfully to tourist revenues. Figuring out how to replace old, politically charged management systems (that valued archaeology as symbolic capital) with postmodern ones is the vital challenge. One thing is pretty certain, however: tourism is one industry that is likely to grow – and grow significantly in the Mediterranean – employing more people than any other industry and generating more revenue than any other (cf. Urry and Larsen 2011: 7). In 2012

more than a billion people visited other countries as tourists – and many millions more were tourists inside their own countries. It is a rare industry that cannot be displaced by global product-sourcing and lower-cost foreign competition (Gould and Burtenshaw 2014: 5). Its impact is incontestable. No less incontestable is the need to measure and maximize the impact of cultural heritage as part of this industry, as Europe adapts to globalization (cf. www.enccatc.org/culturalheritagecountsforeurope).

Archaeological sites have been treated as sacred places of pilgrimage. But in the twenty-first century, faced with Internet-facilitated globalization, these are key assets in driving tourist revenues. As such these are brands lending a country or region identity. Effective marketing is what matters, in all the myriad forms of the new digital age. Ministries of Tourism recognize this and are now seeking political ways to join the supreme heritage brand, Unesco World Heritage status. For all its faults, like FIFA and other world leisure-based brands, Unesco's status is virtually universal and therein, we may suppose, lies its problems of virtuosity arising from its internal politics (Meskell 2015).

Central to this branding is authenticity, essentially the extent to which a place and an experience possesses genuine values. In Butrint's case, this consists of Virgil's stanzas, and genuine Graeco-Roman and Byzantine remains (albeit conserved without reference to the tourist viewer). Sociologists have for forty years attempted to pin down the concept of authenticity more closely. There are three ways of defining this: objectivism/realism; constructivism; and postmodernism. The objectivists believe authenticity can be measured and verified empirically. The constructivists perceive authenticity to be subjective and idiosyncratic. In their view, authenticity is essentially negotiable, and suggests multiple authenticities that are therefore as easily erased as protected. Postmodernists believe authenticity to be always suspect, a construction that has limited value. Yet none can deny the added value that authenticity brings in a commercial setting, as Ministries of Tourism have appreciated for some time (Timothy 2014: 36–7). Added value, however, brings political responsibility in an age when best practices, like the Valletta Convention (1992), have been established by global communities. Twenty years after we began the Butrint project, global international standards are well known (cf. Ayers 2014 in the case of Butrint), and yet in Mediterranean countries – EU and transition economies alike – frequently ignored. Why?

The critical problem is that those responsible for marketing places in Mediterranean countries are very different from the managers of those places who have been educated in the specifics of national cultural histories or/and presenting (involving conservation, publications and so forth) those to their own peers. The latter, rightly or wrongly, appear to be dinosaurs in a new ice age as the cloud relegates them to the status of fossils. But, as these cultural managers or specialists cling on, sustained by out-dated worldviews, the inevitable risk is that fragile places, in the face of increased tourism and/or inadequate conservation maintenance, become ever more fragile. Pompeii is the seminal illustration: a global brand with high visitor numbers, until very recently it also had a history of deplorable management. As we have noted throughout this book, Greece and Italy notoriously boast many poorly curated ancient places while the international authorities continue to lend funds to their ineffective managers. This is why Butrint, in the embryonic democratic state of Albania, matters. The Butrint Foundation's work there shows, warts and all, what might be achieved if European standards including those of sustainability are implemented.

The Albanian Ministry of Culture – past and future

Albania had heritage regulation under communism, managed by the Ministry of Culture. The legislation was adapted to the post-communist environment but in reality there were few real changes. Albania became an Unesco state party with the fall of communism without altering either its legislation or operations; but it signed up to the Valletta Convention of 1992 only in 2008. The Ministry has taken control of salvage archaeology and the issuing of archaeological permits, leaving the Institute of Archaeology as arguably a neutered part of the Academy of Sciences. Not surprisingly, the Ministry has enjoyed only mixed success. Suburban values tend to govern the presentation of place, while academic input has been wholly marginalized as the universities complete the transition to adopt contemporary rather than nationalist standards. With time, the universities are likely to play a political role once more, but this will happen only as they emulate their European peers in their accreditation standards and programming. Licensing laws now govern who

can undertake conservation and practise tourism. Herein the closed shop of cliental relations has stymied new ways of working. The children of the transition era administrations may come to despise their parents for these restrictive practices and the specious consequences, as they have in neighbouring Italy (http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/31/opinion/severgnini-italians-on-the-run.html?_r=0).

The Ministry of Culture, however, endures a revolving door of ministers, whose first task is to create events to promote the government. This is the worst-funded ministry in the government and therefore the one given to up-and-coming politicians, or to those rewarded by the ruling party. Ministers are in power to provide opportunities for their patrons. This makes governing complicated. Edi Rama, when he was Minister of Culture from 1998 to 2001, halted this merry-go-round, and as a result found time to create, among other things, the Butrint National Park with its own administrative authority. Now Prime Minister, he is seeking to enact new legislation that would make heritage sustainable as a tourism driver for the Albanian economy. This means re-envisioning the extant heritage legislation and its providers, and imitating effectively what has been achieved in north-west Europe. If he succeeds, the ephoria of Greece and the soprintendenza in Italy will not be alone in fearing for their futures. Success will spell the end of heritage provision designed for its providers in a Mediterranean state.

The Valletta Convention on the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (1992)

The Butrint Foundation was created shortly after the signing of the Valletta Convention on the Protection of Archaeological Heritage. The 1992 treaty aims to protect the European archaeological heritage 'as a source of European collective memory and as an instrument for historical and scientific study'. This belongs to a growing understanding in the EU of its responsibilities to its archaeological assets as the Cold War ended. During the 1970s the EU community looked towards collective social needs as the basis of its citizenry, but during the 1980s it shed this welfare statist agenda for a neo-liberal one. This focused on a shared cultural heritage and value as the foundation of the EU

citizen, and forced EU policy-makers to envision and produce a new idea of citizenship. The Valletta Convention is one pillar in this new programme. However, the Convention's articles belong to a world wherein the state parties are organized sufficiently to implement appropriate controls. Twenty years after Valletta it is fair to say that Greece and Italy, for example, wherein neo-liberal ideas have failed to take hold, have barely faced up to their responsibilities in this respect. Being outside the EU, Albania was naturally at a huge disadvantage and yet in some areas has made surprising progress in comparison with its Mediterranean neighbours. This said, the considerable damage inflicted upon heritage assets in Albania from the early 1990s can, in part, be blamed upon the delay in ratification of the Convention by the Albanian government until 2008 (although, to be fair, the United Kingdom ratified the accord only in 2000).

The Valetta Convention set out principles for government and articles for government action but, nevertheless, the principles are ones against which the role of other organizations can be examined and, therefore some merit exists in considering each of the articles of the Convention against Butrint Foundation activities over the past two decades. This section is taken from Brian Ayers's review made for the Butrint Foundation in 2013 (Ayers 2014).

Article 1: Definition of archaeological heritage

Such a definition of the archaeological heritage presented posed an early problem for the Butrint Foundation. The Foundation set out to survey the 'archaeological heritage shall include structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, moveable objects, monuments of other kinds as well as their context, whether situated on land or under water'. This is described in Chapter 3 and in many publications, and is arguably one of the fullest examples of its kind for a Graeco-Roman site in the Mediterranean.

Article 2: Protection of archaeological heritage

While Article 2 is clearly intended for state parties, with its emphasis upon legal instruments of protection, it contains the following sub-paragraphs which are relevant to the work of all archaeologists as they should establish systems for:

- i. the maintenance of an inventory of archaeological heritage and the designation of protected monuments and areas;
- ii. the creation of archaeological reserves, even where there are no visible remains on the ground or under water, for the preservation of material evidence to be studied by later generations.

The Butrint Foundation has provided all of the above. In particular, subparagraph i has been fulfilled in three ways: first, through assessment of conservation needs, including an assessment of the Baptistry, followed by a workshop on that monument and its mosaics in 1998; second, by the production of a comprehensive condition survey of all monuments in 2001 (Figure 5.1) which was donated to the Albanian authorities; and third through establishing digitized archives. This archive contains not only an excavation archive with context records, finds data, images and documents provided site-by-site, but also a document archive which contains images from a range of resources such as the Italian Archaeological Mission under Ugolini, the Socialist Archive from communist Albania, and a Venetian and Ottoman Archive. In addition, thanks to this archive, the Foundation was able to encourage the Ministry of Culture



Figure 5.1 Pippa Pierce making a condition survey of the Baptistry mosaic.

on two occasions in its efforts to repatriate swiftly marble portrait heads looted in the unrest in 1991 and sold abroad (cf. Gilkes 2002).

Sub-paragraph ii has been achieved through the establishment of the World Heritage site, its buffer zone and the Butrint National Park. The role of the Butrint Foundation in the development of this governance is described in Chapter 4.

Article 3: To preserve the archaeological heritage and guarantee the scientific significance of archaeological research work

Procedures outlined in Article 3 emphasize that ‘archaeological excavations and prospecting are undertaken in a scientific manner; that non-destructive methods of investigation are applied wherever possible; and that the elements of the archaeological heritage are not uncovered or left exposed during or after excavation without provision being made for their proper preservation, conservation and management’.

The Butrint Foundation has always sought to work to high international standards. Non-destructive survey has been used extensively, notably in seeking to map the remains on the Vrina Plain. Further, its excavations were left open only at the request of the Albanian Institute of Monuments and, in such cases, appropriate programmes of conservation and landscaping have been undertaken (year-by-year funding of conservation of mosaics revealed by the Foundation’s excavations is currently ongoing) (Figure 5.2).

A further procedure within Article 3 stipulates ‘that excavations and other potentially destructive techniques are carried out only by qualified, specially authorized persons.’ All Butrint Foundation interventions, whether for archaeological research or conservation purposes, were subject to detailed applications to, and approval by, the Albanian Institutes of Archaeology and Monuments, with nominated individuals responsible for each project.

Article 4: Measures for the physical protection of the archaeological heritage

Conservation work and its associated procedures by the Butrint Foundation have already been described earlier and in Chapters 3 and 4. Investment



Figure 5.2 Covering the mosaics at Diaporit Roman villa, prior to backfilling the excavations in 2006.

through the Foundation prevented collapse of the channel-side wall of Ali Pasha's castle (see Chapter 4).

Agreement for the storage of archaeological remains recovered as a result of excavations by the Foundation has been secured with the Albanian Institute of Archaeology. In 2006 the Butrint Foundation paid for, refurbished and installed storage facilities in all areas of the Butrint castle stores.

Article 5: Integrated conservation of archaeological heritage

Implementation of the provisions of Article 5, namely such matters as the reconciliation of archaeology and development plans, is not part of the Butrint

Foundation's purview. However, the Foundation has worked to advise the Butrint National Park, the Albanian Institute of Archaeology and the Albanian Ministry of Culture on their individual responsibilities within such a framework. It is encouraging that an Archaeological Service Agency was established within the Ministry of Culture in 2008. Staff of the Foundation also worked with the Albanian Heritage Foundation on a project entitled *The Future of Albania's Past* (FoAP), essentially a compilation of an Historic Environment Record for Albania. This digitized record was donated to the Albanian Institute of Monuments that now has responsibility for its continued maintenance and is used both as a mechanism for development control and as an educational resource.

Sub-paragraph vii of Article 5 of the Convention stipulates that state parties should 'ensure that environmental impact assessments and the resulting decisions involve full consideration of archaeological sites and their settings'. This manifestly did not happen in 2009–10 ahead of the new road constructed through the World Heritage site (see Chapter 4), an infrastructure development that post-dated Albanian ratification of the Convention.

Article 6: Financing of archaeological research and conservation

The Butrint Foundation operated with private funding throughout, as opposed to the state funds presumed by this article.

Article 7: Collection and dissemination of scientific information

The Butrint Foundation believes that the track record of publications linked to its work at Butrint (over 150, not counting volumes with more than one essay) makes Butrint easily one of the best-published archaeological sites in the central Mediterranean.

However, the Foundation is also well aware that almost all of its publications have been in English. Recognizing that Albanian audiences also need to be addressed, the Foundation has taken steps to address this in a fourfold manner. First, its popular but scholarly guides have been published with parallel Albanian and English texts. Second, all display panels at Butrint have been produced in Albanian and English. Third, a 'coffee-table' book, *Eternal Butrint* (Hodges 2006), designed for a wide audience, has been published in Albanian.

Fourth, a range of papers designed for an academic audience has been translated by Solinda Kamani and published in Tirana (Kamani 2011).

Article 8

This provides for the facilitation of ‘national and international exchange of elements of the archaeological heritage for professional scientific purposes while taking appropriate steps to ensure that such circulation in no way prejudices the cultural and scientific value of those elements.’ This summarizes the *raison d’être* of much of the Butrint Foundation’s mission, while those associated with the Foundation’s work are encouraged ‘to promote the pooling of information on archaeological research and excavations in progress and to contribute to the organization of international research programmes’.

Article 9: Promotion of public awareness

This encourages ‘educational actions with a view to rousing and developing an awareness in public opinion of the value of the archaeological heritage for understanding the past and of the threats to this heritage.’ This has been an important part of the Foundation’s programme.

Article 10: Prevention of illicit circulation of elements of the archaeological heritage

While the provisions of Article 10 relate most closely to state parties and other public institutions, sub-paragraph i does charge ‘scientific institutions to pool information on any illicit excavations identified’. The Foundation assisted in the return of a portrait of Livia from the United States in 2000, and facilitated the return of further Roman sculptures from Greece in 2003 (Gilkes 2002). In both cases this was facilitated by the Foundation’s ability to make detailed case histories and to robustly focus and lobby the Ministry of Culture to take international action (cf. Gilkes 2002) (Figure 5.3).

The remaining articles, dealing with implementation of the Valletta Convention at the level of a nation-state, are not relevant to the Butrint Foundation.



Figure 5.3 Ephor Kostas Zachos, hands over a Roman marble sculpture stolen from Butrint to Arta Dade, Minister of Culture, July 2003.

The Norwich Accord: spirit of place (2009)

Just over a decade after the 1998 Saranda workshop which with its specific social realities for the Albanian participants set in motion a management plan for Butrint based upon its values, especially its spirit of place, Icomos – the international council on monuments and sites – passed the Norwich Accord. The accord declares the need to find the spirit of place and, in conservation terms, secure this for both communities and cultural tourism (it formally incorporates Fielden and Johliehto's (1993) views, which are cited at the beginning of this chapter). As it is such a central issue to the protection and sustainability of the social reality, it makes Butrint special as much as its monuments. For this reason the nine elements of the Norwich Accord merit detailing as follows:

1. *The Concept of Spirit of Place is central to the rationale for the protection of the historic environment in the 21st century.* The concept of 'spirit of place' recognizes conservation as a dynamic process involving an ongoing interaction between the tangible and intangible heritage: it is

concerned with subjective relationships and the different identities of people with places.

2. *'Significance' or 'Spirit of Place' within the Historic Environment* is not an objective quality, or one accepted primarily as being inherent in a place, but reflects fundamental relationships between people and places. The spirit of place is the outcome of human inspiration, creativity, endeavour, and validates ongoing interventions to preserve specific architecture, archaeology, cultural landscapes and historic urban environments with their associated memories, stories and traditions.
3. *Conservation Management Plans (CMPs)* provide the opportunity through which the values of a place can be captured, the pressures for change can be managed, and policy recommendations made that will enhance the spirit of place. They include mention of individual experts and community groups who might contribute to the conservation management process, but rarely involve visitors in the consultations.
4. *Cultural Heritage & Tourism Professionals and Decision Makers* play a critical role in mediating between different interests and opinions. Only through a thorough understanding of key relationships is it possible to ensure that actions to rehabilitate the physical fabric and manage public access will enhance rather than diminish the Spirit of Place.
5. *Community Engagement* is essential to achieve positive outcomes for the conservation process. Public engagement with cultural heritage places and traditions, and the aspirations of diverse groups of community stakeholders, inform good decision-making.
6. *Communities and Visitors (cultural tourists)* are active players alongside cultural heritage professionals in the continuous process of finding, defining and re-defining the spirit of place both where they live and where in the world they are visitors.
7. *Shared Responsibility* on the part of the host community and the visitor brings with it a duty of respect. This requires reasonable and well-managed access to and participation in cultural development and cultural heritage as well as an understanding of different cultural values.
8. *Cultural Exchange* provides personal experience of that which has survived from the past as well as the contemporary life and society of others. Interpretation and presentation, especially when it is community-

based, play an important role in creating opportunities to make the cultural heritage accessible to diverse audiences. Cultural tourism is one of the foremost vehicles of cultural exchange.

9. *Cultural Tourism* management is a central part of destination management. Visitors – local, national and international – are important reasons for and instigators of conservation projects and generators of economic development. This economic reality, managed sensitively, serves to enhance the spirit of place. However, threats to the spirit of a place caused by overwhelming numbers of visitors at iconic cultural heritage sites are a worldwide challenge for cultural heritage management.

The humanity behind this thinking, arising from a larger history of *genius loci* as well as meetings at English cathedral towns of York, Norwich and Canterbury, is palpable. Each cathedral covets its spirit of place, and guards its sacred atmosphere for all visitors, believers and non-believers. In the wake of the 1998 Saranda meeting (see Chapter 4) and the efforts to protect and introduce best practices at Butrint (Figure 5.4), the Norwich Accord cannot fail to evoke a smile. The accord clearly recognizes the importance of an intangible heritage associated with sites and monuments, and confronts openly the need to protect this in the face of development and, of course, the suburban



Figure 5.4 Conserving the fortifications of the lower city of Butrint, with local workmen.

instincts of many officials responsible for the curation of past heritage. In short, the present matters too, because it matters to tourists.

Mediterranean visitors (including cultural heritage managers) to great heritage shrines in countries like Denmark, the United Kingdom or Ireland completely grasp the point in this civic context, but are utterly perplexed in their own political arenas. As a result, spirit of place has steadily disappeared from most Mediterranean sites. Archaeological sites have become synonymous with hot, dusty, incomprehensible ruins. The pleasures of the grand tour have been forsaken, in theory, to meet the commodification of the past made possible, paradoxically by those who view archaeology as symbolic capital for the nationalist movement (cf. Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996). The tourists' gaze has been treated with contempt, with few exceptions. Investment in Graeco-Roman archaeological sites and Mediterranean castles has been traditionally a case of indifferent conservation and poor presentation. Governments have led the way in privileging restoration costs at the expense of planning for sustainability and thoughtful income generation by privileging the pleasures of the visit. The European Union has cravenly supported procurement for major archaeological sites in the Mediterranean without asking the basic questions about their future. The loss of spirit means that the tourist revenue will inevitably decline. We have already noted the problem of sustainability at Pompeii, the world's most famous archaeological site. Many other examples exist. The cities of Athens and Rome, places defined by their archaeological parks since the late nineteenth century, have a poor history of conservation and maintenance, notwithstanding their pre-eminent significance in global tourism (cf. Hamilakis 2008; Manacorda 2014; Volpe 2015).

Closer to Butrint, the European Union has pumped millions into the conservation of Corfu's Old Castle and Palaiopolis, but failed to mandate that these should be accessible to the public in any intelligible way. Neatly displayed but often closed and poorly signposted, the effect has left these great Mediterranean monuments with the spirit of low-grade public parks. At Nikopolis, Octavian's victory city, the restoration of the Roman fortifications and churches – supported by the EU – blatantly follows a non-reversible, highly expensive, and prominently intrusive direction. As lenders to Greece, the EU has proven to be irresponsible in an issue which matters significantly for a country dependent upon tourism.

Not all Mediterranean countries act with such limited regard for their responsibility to their patrimony, however. In the twentieth century, Malta managed its archaeology to benefit the island (Vella and Gilkes 2001). It also manages fragile Neolithic sites like the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum (dating to the fourth and third millennia) to the highest international standards, encouraging visitorship while sustaining this deep underground sacred site (Pace 2000). Heritage Malta is no less diligent about the protection and maintenance of its massive early modern fortifications; while keeping a keen eye on sustainability, it recognizes the importance of these places to the spirit of this quintessential Mediterranean place. Is it size or is it tradition that distinguishes Malta's cultural heritage strategy from those pursued by its neighbours?

Stakeholders

In practice, the stakeholders in Albanian cultural heritage are many. In Butrint's case, there is Unesco, the Albanian state and its officials, Albanian archaeologists, Albanian visitors, the international scientific community, and, of course, international visitors. Let us scrutinize some of these: Unesco might claim to be a stakeholder, but it is not. Apart from its work on the inscription of Butrint and its intervention when it was deemed a World Heritage site in peril in 1997, it has played a marginal role. Technically the patron of the brand, it was incapable of defending Butrint when the government cut a new road through the park in 2009–10. Is this surprising, given it has a portfolio of over a thousand World Heritage sites and a miniscule operating budget (Meskell 2015)? A recent commentary in *The Economist* says it all: 'UNESCO, like most other UN agencies, suffers from a house culture which prefers to deal with governments, and lives happily with the fiction that governments genuinely care about citizens and their heritage' (*The Economist* 14 July 2012: 70).

Forgetting Unesco as a lost cause in the short term at least, and beyond the constantly changing roster of personnel tending desks in the Ministry of Culture in Albania, there exists a larger issue. To what extent is Albanian society – its people – a stakeholder? The cultural patrimony is an asset in civil society, but at stake is how this asset is protected for a global society. Environmentalists began to face this issue twenty years ago, as Amartya Sen

pointed out: ‘The environmental challenge is part of a more general problem related to resource allocation involving “public goods”, where the commodity is enjoyed in common rather than separately by one consumer only ... We have to consider the possibility of state action and social provisioning, we also have to examine the part that can be played by the development of social values and a sense of responsibility that may reduce the need for forceful state action’ (Sen 1999: 269). The quest to introduce and sustain these social values at Butrint, in retrospect, is the central issue of the project described in this book. Hoxha enforced these collective values brutally. In the aftermath of his premiership, the country was stricken by illegal construction on a spectacular scale, as well as vast quantities of rubbish. Civic values collapsed. As mayor of Tirana, Edi Rama fought to reclaim these lost values, commenting after three years in office: ‘If you look around our country and our cities you will see how much energy individuals have spent to increase the quality of life. You would be amazed if you had any idea of how it was ten years ago. But now we have to start – and we have already started – to build a sense of belonging to the space that is in between “my house” and “the other’s house”’ (Rama 2003). Rama challenged Albanians, as foreign organizations did, to introduce civic norms, including zoning and rubbish disposal. Nevertheless, these have been slow to take root in the post-communism psyche. Cultural heritage, like zoning, has experienced its anarchic phase. Restaurants suddenly appeared inside the archaeological sites at Apollonia, Byllis and Lezha. Being especially fragile, many thoughtful Albanians ask, without an outside agency to support and lobby, will Butrint be permitted to follow these other sites? Might it be sold to developers and in due course suffer the degradation of conserved monuments, visitor experience and wealth-generation?

Specifically, do states manage their cultural patrimony well, and should not other stakeholders be involved in this management to ensure sustainability? Can archaeological and historic places meet the demand from tourists, providing revenue, and at the same time retain their authenticity? Can commodification be contained in order to protect the authenticity of the place, (selectively) created by the archaeologists? Such questions are not limited to an archaeological site in Albania. Neither are they simply Mediterranean issues, but rather a genuine global concern.

Visitors – global citizens – are not oblivious to an absence of civic values when it comes to cultural heritage. Most will be seeking something, as Urry and Larsen (2011) have pointed out, but in Butrint's case it will not be a rendering of Virgil's stanzas in stone. As was noted earlier, the authenticity of the ruins matters to them – the theatre with its Greek inscriptions, the Baptistery, the Great Basilica and the faux medieval castle. The importance of authenticity cannot be doubted. But it is *their* experience of the place that matters to them most. The fact that it is in Albania, that it is safe, and above all in environmental terms, magical. The place affects positive emotions, invoking joy as well as excitement, and the thrill of the unexpected. Notwithstanding the experience of being present with other tourists, as in a shopping mall or vacation resort, there is at Butrint a feeling of human eternity. This is a social reality as much as the physicality of its monuments.

Defining Butrint's visitorship is now of paramount importance (Figure 5.5). Understanding the backgrounds and interests of visitors in order to specify how to market it is a critical variable. In the 1990s and early 2000s the lure of



Figure 5.5 Visitors arriving at Saranda harbour from Corfu by the *Flying Dolphin*.

Enver Hoxha's legacy, combined with Butrint's status as a place, were compelling in comparison with the non-places where international visitors were vacationing on Corfu. Today, it is the pull of Butrint's brand – its reputation as an experience – that draws people in. Did the visitors discover Butrint from the Albanian ministerial websites or posters, or the Unesco website? How are tour companies marketing it, now that the shadow of communism has been replaced by genuine local and international competition to bring tourists of different classes to the place? The data do not yet exist to answer this, but will eventually be the driver for the next chapter in the history of Butrint.

Institute of Archaeology?

Archaeologists seem to be the short-term losers in this new order of things. Whereas Butrint was effectively the property of the academics populating the Institute of Archaeology when the Butrint Foundation arrived in 1993, today it is managed by the Butrint National Park, under the umbrella of the Ministry of Culture, with excavation licences being granted at annual meetings by a committee in which the Institute of Archaeology is a stakeholder but not the arbiter of the decision-making. Science and discovery are now viewed as less important than the protection of an economic asset. The licensing procedures are coming to resemble those in neighbouring countries, and as a result the Institute of Archaeology can no longer easily generate revenue in the form of honoraria for its personnel. It is doubtful that the current bureaucracy will lead to any genuine vision for the academic stewardship of the site. A new vision is required to shape discovery to the needs of generating new branding for Butrint. Excavations in the Roman Forum of Butrint on behalf of the University of Notre Dame have started this process (Hernandez and Çondi 2014).

Meanwhile, the presentation of the site merits re-thinking. The Foundation took some baby steps in this regard, but new strides are now needed. The Foundation produced its first site brochure in 1996 and erected site panels to help visitors interpret the ruins. It also worked to promote the site in popular magazines and in newspaper articles in Europe and the United States. From the mid-1990s, a slew of short articles linked it to the 'footsteps of Aeneas', yet

focused on the unspoilt nature of this place in the aftermath of a singularly totalitarian regime. More importantly, day-trippers from Corfu recognized the cheap package trip to Butrint to be an excellent diversion from two weeks otherwise spent poolside. Bussed in from Saranda over the degraded roads, the Corfu-based visitors found enough in Butrint to be memorable and so, with little further marketing (none directly funded by the Foundation), visitor numbers grew. To encourage this further, and with British Council support, the Foundation embarked upon training the site guides, as well as upgrading the site information brochures. As noted in Chapter 4, improved and colourful site panels, designed by Studio Inklinc of Florence, were installed in 2005; combining short texts, reconstructions and simple plans, they were an immediate success. These have now been replaced several times, and imitated elsewhere in Albania. A 2008 guide for school children attempted to broaden the site's visitorship and launch new bonds with the place; the aim was to increase teacher-led school trips to the site, as happens each spring in Greece and Italy. All these instruments, though, pre-date the online tools that are certain, even in Albania, to shape the future of places like Butrint.

As the visitorship comes to terms with the ease of reaching Butrint, there will be an eager demand for new materials, and a hunger for an after-visit experience to complement the spirit of place. In this context the future of an Institute of Archaeology devoted purely to the theatre of excavation must surely be extremely limited.

The local community: did they benefit?

After 2000, as the park began to take shape, the Butrint Foundation took the first steps in community-development efforts. It designed projects, thanks to the (Dietel partners') Philanthropic Collaboration, that connected local people to Butrint (Figure 5.6). Awareness of and pride in the site were generated in the participant villages, ensuring the protection of the place and making a significant step towards its eventual sustainability. Absent, however, was a genuine anthropological approach, that grasped the realities of the communities' needs, power structures and existing socio-economic inequalities. Lacking this



Figure 5.6 A view of the community shop at Butrint.

understanding, the projects helped selectively but marginalized the remainder. Existing inequalities among the villages were reinforced, which generated some resentment towards the park management and those benefitting from tourist visits to Butrint (Phelps forthcoming).

At the heart of this was the failure of the Butrint Foundation to negotiate a place for itself in the fabric of the community. Because of this, the Foundation was forced to take over the heritage strategy based on the management plan that they had prepared. This challenged and even reinforced existing power relations in the villages within and close to the park (cf. Holland 1998). In retrospect it is clear that the unaligned agendas of the Albanian government and Butrint Foundation resulted in both miscommunication and the Albanian government's disregard for the sustainability process that the Butrint Foundation had advocated since its inception and which it had articulated at the Saranda workshop in 1998. In many respects it is a seminal illustration of how neo-liberal agendas take precedence over, and potentially destroy, sustainable development projects.

Making matters worse, the community has never been considered by the park management. In retrospect, having a local stakeholder committee in place from the outset would have been a giant step towards securing local agency and participation. Such a committee might have ensured that the communities were active actors in the park, with rights to participate politically, socially and economically. The Foundation should have been encouraged to create this social agent-focused approach, privileging the assumption that the benefits of Butrint-based tourism would have a uniform impact upon all the communities engaged in the park. After the 1998 Saranda meeting, there was too much emphasis on the site itself and too little on any policy to comprehend the entangled nature of the local context and include all actors at play, from the poor to the local elite.

Local participation in the stakeholder committees that manage heritage projects is normal in many European countries (although not Greece or, until very recently, Italy). Local stakeholders – or at least their representatives – were involved in the Saranda workshop in 1998. Problems arose thereafter, however, and have lasted for a good fifteen years or more. In this context, the conflicts within the post-communist stakeholders, as well as the perceived treatment of the villagers as the 'Other' by the Tirana-based government officials, all compounded the resistance to encourage full participation. But the bottom line is that, even with the Foundation's ready disposition to support the villagers as participants, there was not the anthropologically trained skill base to make this happen. Neo-liberal archaeologists did their best, but their best was limited by their training and experience.

What if?

In many ways, Butrint has become a symbol for Albania, as we envisaged when making the park in 1998–99. As early as 1999, the then Prime Minister, Pandeli Majko, lamented that the Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien had complemented him on his wonderful capital, Butrint. Majko was indignant. But Tirana then, as now, while being the compass point for all Albanians, remains essentially an unknown ex-communist capital. For Prime Minister Majko, Butrint was a place associated with his education in the communist era; somewhere to be tacitly rejected. On the other hand, many Albanians prize its otherness. In Jameson's sense it is truly postmodern, a place for an age where paradoxically we have forgotten to think historically (2005: ix). Here is a place for a picnic when the weather turns inclement and the beaches at Saranda and Ksamili are uncomfortable. So different from other Albanian places (being uncluttered with supermodernity and a protected woodland), it is a special theme park where children can race through authentic ruins. Here, children can also form a bond with this primal landscape – nature – that will constitute a key point for considering subsequent places later in life. Given how alien nature is to our postmodern lives, is it surprising that this hyperreal place is chosen by brides to be photographed? It is both timeless and quintessentially Albanian, and promises a vicarious pleasure that is the binary opposite of the pain that has characterized the everyday of the last twenty years in that country. From this experience, so different from their built environments, Albanians begin to ingest both a European psychology and some connection to their own history. This status may explain Butrint's depiction on the state's largest bank note. The 2,000 lek note illustrates the (Hellenistic and mid-Roman) Theatre, although it is (incorrectly) captioned as the amphitheatre of Butrint (possibly in homage to Ridley Scott's film, *Gladiator*). To the bank-note users, of course, like most visitors, Albanian or other, the difference between a theatre and an amphitheatre is semantic, even though most years a short festival of sorts is staged in the Theatre, sustaining its original use in antiquity. It is a perfect example of Umberto Eco's theory: 'the possible world of narratives is the only universe in which we can be absolutely certain about something, and it gives a very strong sense of truth ... In this universe of ours, with its wealth of errors and legends, historical data and false information, one absolute truth is the fact that Superman is Clark Kent. All the rest is open to debate' (Eco 2013: 431–2).

Will it remain this way, a profoundly historical theatre of illusions? Does Unesco World Heritage site status safeguard the spirit of Butrint, its woodland glades and reversibly restored monuments within its lagoonal setting? Let's be a little more explicit. Without a foreign agency to protect its values, will the ticket revenues be deployed to maintain the ruins to modern conservation standards and the woodlands so that the roots do not damage the ruins? Will the light bulbs in the museum be changed? Will the objects in the museum cases be protected from corrosion? Will the toilets, installed after a decade of supreme effort, be cleaned and kept open? Most of all, will the protected buffer zone remain free of new development? Does anyone in Tirana actually understand the trust Unesco invested in their government by electing Butrint to global status?

Those many Albanians who participated in the odyssey to support the Butrint Foundation have their doubts. They looked to foreigners for civic values and apolitical best practice, and also for secure income streams. But, then, reasoned all the main players involved in the Butrint Foundation, if with all its statutory protection and good will Butrint is despoiled now, what hope is there? Now, after two decades of involvement, it is time to be trusting of new agents to ensure its sustainability as a place – both in terms of its heritage treasures and in terms of the revenues (and employment) that its identity brings directly and indirectly to Albania.

Miraculously, Butrint during the transition years has escaped the early learning curve of bad practice. In ten years' time, though, if not maintained, Butrint's monuments and its museum will need serious upgrading. Then, if not before, if the administrative system remains part of the state, the management of Butrint will need to be judged. Will it meet international standards, given it has the resources? Or will it fall prey to the Pompeii premise? Unchecked malfeasance, coupled with unfettered capitalism, and fuelled invariably by nationalism is the blight that appears to still shackle neighbouring states like Greece and Italy from responsibly managing their patrimony (cf. Hamilakis 2007; 2008).

In the immediate balance of probabilities, while the administration of Butrint may be less than it might be, the place will continue to convey the properties envisaged by the Foundation. Visitors will still come and cherish the experience. This achievement cannot be understated.

Retrospections

Terminal NGO

Hindsight is, of course, a wonderful thing. The Butrint Foundation was, rightly or wrongly, an unalloyed arbiter for the future of the place. That was its mission. Established by two leading businessmen, it operated to a tight timetable that was audited at quarterly meetings. Quite unlike a state committee or a university meeting, it ran on a cost-benefit model within the charity sector. Discipline was its watchword. Robustly and persistently lobbying government to act strategically – as, for example, in the case of repatriating looted statuary and the nature of road infrastructure – was its normal operational mode. Now, with its closure as an active agent in Butrint, its role has been taken over by the Albanian-American Enterprise Foundation (AAEF). In many respects this change promises to be a constructive next step, as Albanian administrators, steeped in best practice, essentially support projects at Butrint in return for effective management. An Albanian NGO, then, has replaced the Butrint Foundation to ensure that the administration of Butrint is consistent with its inscription by Unesco, and more importantly, sustainable. Understandably, many Albanians instinctively feel more comfortable with this arrangement. The Butrint Foundation was regularly accused of being colonialist, perhaps on occasions with justification. The AAEF, on the other hand, has been able to impose electronic ticketing at Butrint, meaning that ticket revenues are now controlled much more scrupulously than hitherto.

Archaeologists of the pivotal generation

Butrint has benefited enormously from a modern holistic approach to its archaeology. The Butrint Foundation has altered the ancient city's identity, transforming it into a place with a master narrative as opposed to a coalition of monuments in a fine setting (cf. Lichrou, O'Malley and Patterson 2014). The impact of the scientific and popular investment is apparent, and has been a contributing factor in the growth of visitorship to Butrint.

But as a pivotal generation of postmodern archaeologists, privileged to be supported in ways that were inconceivable fifty years ago, it behoves my peers and myself to ask tough questions as the elimination occurs of many academic

and state positions in the field. Soon our community will look very different and possess substantially altered resources.

Our experiences, of course, confirm Brian Fagan's view that the teaching of archaeology is far removed from the circumstances we encounter in places like Albania. Attacking the academic treadmill, Fagan pleads for new standards in archaeology in universities: '[the] value system is flawed. Your priorities and ethics stink!' (2006: 9). I would go further than Fagan. As placemakers, we have responsibilities to the community, and learning how best to curate the cultural assets themselves must be part of the training offered in any standard programme encompassing archaeological theory and method. Presently post-colonial archaeology and its critique, like much cultural heritage training, are essentially little more than first-world rhetoric, alien to the daily operations of communities associated with nearly a thousand World Heritage sites like Butrint (Figure 5.7). In such circumstances it is often hard to resist the charge of crypto-colonialism once the word 'heritage' is uttered (cf. Michael Herzfeld quoted by Byrne 2011: 147; Herzfeld 2002).

On this analysis, it appears that archaeology (and the pivotal generation) has failed. Why? In a nutshell, our (neo-liberal) western values in archaeology are not measured in capacity-building. Instead, universities discretely calculate overheads and boast about publications; only recently, and in a limited way, have they prized impact in the wider world (cf. Hamilakis 2004). The politics of pedagogy in a discipline like archaeology have become confused (Hamilakis 2004). There is an important place for learning and comprehending the past. This demands skills that are very different from the application of archaeology in a developing world. Distinguishing and connecting the two differing aspects of archaeology – classroom theory and the applied – are important, as the experiences described in this book attempt to illustrate. Meanwhile, unsurprisingly, the tourism and development industries treat archaeology as a quirky add-on, and at worst are bemusedly mindful of the gravitational pull of the authentic monument, its art and its spirit of place. Capacity-building, involving leadership programmes remain the domain of foundations, Unesco and the like, outside the academy. The meeting of minds across this divide seldom occurs, meaning the notion of one world archaeology is both academic and therefore, sad to say, often ineffective. Clearly, there is an urgent need to confront this dysfunction which otherwise will lead to the



Figure 5.7 Crossing the river Pavllas to reach Cape Stylo, 2006.

steady and inevitable destruction and devaluation of archaeological sites (cf. Comer 2012: 186).

Plainly, the Butrint Foundation archaeologists took on more in Butrint than we might have imagined or even realistically expected. For sure, and perhaps understandably, we were unprepared for the ideological conflict and the charges of colonialism. But we were also unprepared for the technical challenges of the site, where electricity was a scarce resource, just as new digital

technologies were being introduced. In the face of experimentation we surely coped adequately to confront major historical questions that have left an enduring mark on our understanding of Butrint and the diachronic story of the southern Adriatic Sea region. It will be questioned, however, whether we left a strong trained archaeological community to pursue our work. Did we create technical imitators rather than a legacy in the form of agents of intellectual enquiry (cf. Hodges 2015b)? The Foundation's publications are an indubitable achievement, but the digital legacy is as yet of a primitive kind and will require an overhaul before it serves a new generation.

Yet as we struggled to make the park at Butrint, we learnt the hard way that our western values were at sea in the entangled post-communist context. We managed confidently in the field of conservation, introducing best practice. We might also boast that our desire to safeguard Butrint's conflicted landscape and champion its spirit of place was well meant and possibly visionary. However, our capacity to achieve the goal of making this fragile place sustainable was limited by the absence of any anthropological or development support and experience in our group. There will be no excuse for similar behaviour in the future.

A checklist

Given the chance to repeat this experience, what is the road map to making a place like Butrint sustainable in the twenty-first century? First stop might be this checklist by Johannes F. Linn – former Vice-President for Europe and Central Asia at the World Bank – of bridges that archaeologists and development economists need to build (2014: 89):

1. A more consistent and widely shared language of common concepts
2. A clearer understanding of the dynamic linkage of key aspects of the process of cultural asset preservation
3. The recognition among archaeologists that the economic and financial dimensions of their projects are critical for the sustainability and scalability of their efforts
4. The recognition among development economists that non-economic values play an important role and that the conservation of cultural assets sustainably and at scale will make a real contribution to human welfare.

To this list, we might add, clear resource implications exist for archaeologists:

- Capacity to create a holistic approach encapsulated in a management plan. Leadership has to work effectively at all levels, providing capacity-building for all aspects of cultural heritage management. This also involves building teams capable of defining the place as a brand, as well as presenting and marketing this brand for strategically identified diverse audiences/ visitorship.
- Capacity to envisage how the narrative of a place – in essence its identity – is constructed and may be improved or enlarged by archaeological interventions (large and small).
- Investment in technical support to deliver accurate reporting on the archaeology including the material culture.
- Investment in best practice conservation, involving reversibility.

Training on this scale – in archaeological theory and methodology, as well as cultural history; in conservation practices; in the management of projects (marketing, finance and presentation); in community participation; and in grant-writing – promises a very different discipline from one with an emphasis upon art and monuments. The latter is all very well on paper, but cultural and political circumstances intrude in Mediterranean countries like Albania,



Figure 5.8 A shepherd and flock in front of the Triangular Castle.



Figure 5.9 The sixth-century Baptistery mosaic.

Greece and Italy (Hamilakis 2008; Manacorda 2015). It may take generations to release archaeology and its management from the grasp of academics and curators wedded to its concepts of symbolic capital (Figure 5.9), and hand it on to cultural heritage leaders who ensure best international practice and deliver products to southern Europe's singularly most successful industry: tourism. There is also the issue of corruption to consider once procurement and ticket revenues are involved. My peers and I belong to a pivotal generation but . . . we need to envisage a future where the assets have ensured sustainability. A major aspect of these assets, as the Butrint project has attempted to show, is based upon selective scientific enquiry undertaken to enlarge the narrative of a place and exploiting the promotional advantages of the theatre of excavation. Tourist revenues, as a result, need to be firmly grasped, as do the intrinsic challenges of managing the assets. In Albania, if Prime Minister Edi Rama aspires to implement just such a revolution, at a stroke, most of the present archaeological community will be retired and succeeded by a generation already confronting the ethical challenges posed by capitalism. It is a

far cry from the heyday Albanian archaeology in the 1980s on the eve of democracy.

Over the last twenty-five years much has happened in Albania, especially to its archaeologists. Quoting two nervous members of this community in 1993, no-one could have pre-judged where their students would be in 2015:

The transition from dictatorship to democracy in Albania . . . is more than a simple mechanical change from one system to another . . . It is still too early to assess to what extent democratic changes in different areas of life have been adopted. For many reasons Albania will have adopted a similar course to that of other countries of central Europe, but the Albanian situation has certain peculiarities that need not be detailed here. One thing is clear, and that is that Albanian society, in regaining its democratic and human identity, has created the conditions needed for integration with dignity into the community of European and human cultures.

Miraj and Zeqo 1993: 123

Social change has been achieved quickly in Albania, as its people have sought to be Europeans after four decades of isolation (Figure 5.10). Political



Figure 5.10 Approaching Ali Pasha's castle along the Vivari Channel in a mussel-fisherman's boat.

change has occurred much more slowly, though, and tied to this is a resistance to debating the roots of the country other than in terms of its cultural heritage resources. Albanian archaeologists now need to face up to a future determined by cloud-based tourism, and the prospects of playing a part in rewriting Mediterranean history. If they do, and bring ideas to the debate, they will have been released from the dark shadow of Enver Hoxha. If this happens, Butrint's fragile yet eternal stones will continue to endure.

Notes

2 Virgil's Long Shadow

- 1 Translations by Paul Gwynne, from Gwynne, Hodges and Vroom 2014.

4 A Short History of the Butrint Foundation

- 1 At the same conference in Tirana, 1998, however, I showed sections of the films made by the film studios, Luce, for Luigi Maria Ugolini in the 1920s and 1930s to attract visitors to Butrint. The archaeologists, who had never seen them, were paradoxically both astonished and thrilled.
- 2 Approximately US\$250,000 was expended directly on community projects (apart from the refurbishment of the Vrina school), less than 5 per cent of the overall programme at Butrint. The chief funder of this programme was the Philanthropic Collaboration on behalf of an anonymous donor, made possible by the Dietel Partners.
- 3 As of 2012, the regional institutes that influence site management include the Municipality of Saranda, the heads of the local Communes of Xarra and Ksamili, councils of local communes and regional environmental agencies. Non-governmental institutions that are established stakeholders in Butrint's site management include the Forestry Directorate, the World Bank, Unesco, the Fisherman Association of Saranda and Butrint, and tourism agencies in Saranda.
- 4 The 10,000 lek note depicts Butrint's Theatre which, influenced by the film *Gladiator*, is labelled as an amphitheatre!

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